Decision Making in U.S. History

Antebellum America

Kevin O'Reilly

Nancy Spear, Editor
Dr. Aaron Willis, Project Coordinator

Social Studies School Service
10200 Jefferson Blvd., P.O. Box 802
Culver City, CA 90232
http://socialstudies.com
access@socialstudies.com
(800) 421-4246

10200 Jefferson Blvd., P.O. Box 802
Culver City, CA 90232
United States of America

(310) 839-2436
(800) 421-4246

Fax: (800) 944-5432
Fax: (310) 839-2249

http://socialstudies.com
access@socialstudies.com

ISBN: 978-1-56004-365-2

Product Code: ZP382

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kevin O'Reilly is History Department Chair at Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School, where he has taught for 29 years. He was National Council for the Social Studies/ *Time* Magazine Secondary Teacher of the Year, Kidger Award Recipient, Richard Farrell National Teacher of the Year, NASDAQ/National Council on Economic Education National Grand Prize Winner, and American Historical Association Beveridge Teaching Prize Winner. He has authored six other books, over 30 articles in professional journals, a history videotape, and two Internet-based simulations. He has conducted more than 100 professional workshops on critical thinking and decision making in history.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My appreciation to the following for their help on this volume: Professor Steven Mintz for advice on Lessons 2, 4, and 5, and Sean O'Reilly for research and editing.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Think of this book, and the other books in this series, not as a text, but as a menu. As a teacher, you select lessons from the menu. It was never intended that you would have everything on the menu—that would be overeating. Take a look at the table of contents. When choosing a lesson, look first at the problems on the student handout(s), and then at the student handout describing these problems' historical outcomes. If you like what you see, take a look at the lesson plan for ideas on using the handouts. You can teach all of the lessons by giving students a problem handout, having them discuss what they would do, and finally distributing the outcomes handout. You may also consult the "Quick Motivator" section of a lesson plan to use the handouts as a short introduction to class.

On the other hand, you can think of this book as a "how-to" guide for teaching specific decision-making skills while also covering significant events in United States history. The book posits a general guideline of ten distinct skills, organized under the acronym **P-A-G-E** to help students remember these skills. Take a look at the explanation of **P-A-G-E** in the introduction to this book, under the section titled "Guide to Thoughtful Decision Making." This section explains each of the ten skills and includes examples.

Every lesson in this series analyzes the historical topic in terms of **P-A-G-E.** Each lesson targets specific skills, letting the content and the actual decision in history determine the skills emphasized in the lesson. Take a look at the skills grid for each lesson on page 1 of this book. Handouts are frequently used to focus students on using specific skills. For example, many lessons include a list of questions designed to provoke more questions from students, as well as to give them ideas of the types of questions to ask. Other lessons give students a list of assumptions and ask which they assumed in making their decisions. The other skills have similar handouts.

Whether you try the problem-discussion-outcome approach or concentrate more on specific decision-making skills, I hope these books will help make you a more effective teacher and help your students learn United States history in a way that will help prepare them to make more thoughtful decisions as citizens.

Kevin O'Reilly

INTRODUCTION

RATIONALE: Hindsight versus Foresight

When we study history, it is all too easy to sit in judgment of those who came before us. We read it after the fact; we see it in hindsight. Given the benefit of such 20/20 hindsight, some historical figures seem to have been very misguided or downright silly in their decisions. Why didn't they anticipate the consequences of their choices? How could they have been so shortsighted? Sports enthusiasts call this sort of analysis "Monday morning quarterbacking."

However, it's not so easy to laugh at the follies of past decision makers if we are confronted with decisions in history before we learn the actual results. In such a situation, we find ourselves making some of the same mistakes that historical characters made, and we sometimes commit new errors they did not make. This method of studying history, which we might call "foresight history," is far more challenging—and engaging—than the traditional retroactive method to which we are inured.

In short, when we learn history by hindsight we risk becoming more arrogant and complacent. If, on the other hand, we learn history by *foresight,* by casting ourselves in the role of those historical figures and making decisions as they did—without knowing the outcome—we can learn humility and gain a great deal of empathy for them. Students in my classes constantly exclaim, "This is hard!" as opposed to, "This is boring!"

Foresight history also helps students improve key decision-making skills they will use again and again as citizens. Schools of law, medicine, business, and nursing, along with the military and many other institutions, use case-study methods, where students are forced to make decisions about a particular case and then analyze their thinking. If each of these varied disciplines values decision making so much, shouldn't we be training all our future citizens how to make good decisions?

History provides many benefits for those who study it. Historical knowledge can be liberating all by itself, letting us draw back the veil of ignorance and see the present with eyes enlightened by the past. The more knowledge of history we possess, the better we understand our societies and ourselves. Study and evaluation of primary sources, discussions of motives, debates about significance, analyzing causes and effects, and many other strategies are vital to history courses. The lessons here on decision making are meant to support and enhance these other methods of studying history, not replace them with a more "practical" type of history.

OVERVIEW

The lessons in *Decision Making in U. S. History* are to be used independently within a standard U.S. history course in middle school, high school, or college. Each book in this series comprises between eight and thirteen lessons. Each lesson includes the following:

1. Introduction: includes an overview of the topic, content vocabulary, and decision-making skills emphasized in the lesson.
2. Lesson plan: includes suggestions for how to use the handouts, how to focus on decision-making skills, how to connect the decision to the larger historical context, how to use video and other supplementary sources, and how to troubleshoot problems, should any arise.
3. Suggested answers: this section features teacher notes about outcomes (student versions of the outcomes are also provided—see number 6 below), references to historians' interpretations of the topic, decision-making analysis, and suggestions for further research.
4. Sources: includes the specific sources used in the lesson.
5. Problem(s): reproducible handouts used by students to read and analyze the problem.
6. Historical outcome of the problem: what people in history actually did and the consequences thereof.
7. Primary sources and visuals (if any): these are integrated into the lesson itself and are not included merely as window dressing.

Each individual decision-making challenge is referred to as a "problem." Some lessons have one problem to challenge students, while others contain numerous problems. The handouts for each lesson are reproducible; teachers can also decide to use only selected parts of the handouts, if so desired.

While decision making is the main point of the books, historical content is also very important. These lessons focus on real historical problems that convey powerful lessons about U.S. history. The problems involve important issues relevant both to America's past and its present: taxation, foreign intervention, regulation of businesses and individuals, immigration, welfare, war, and so forth. In addition, not all of the problems come from the perspective of political leaders: many ask students to consider the perspectives of ordinary Americans such as workers, voters, farmers, African Americans, business owners, Native Americans, and women. Including problems from the perspectives of ordinary people prepares students for their roles as citizens in a democracy and encourages empathy for unfamiliar groups.

Most of the problems are brief—some as short as one paragraph—and can be used as class warm-ups lasting no more than ten minutes. Even with the shorter problems, however, the outcomes can often be quite complex, running on for several pages. The problems may appear deceptively simple, but analyzing them can be complicated. You can best judge how much analysis to include for each problem, and for how long to run each problem and discussion.

On the other hand, some problems are more complicated. These problems deal with crucial turning points in the nation's history. Students will almost certainly need more background information before making decisions, and analysis of these problems could take several class periods. These more involved problems could form the organization for an entire unit of study. For example, in my classes the problem on the New Deal provides me with the bulk of the time and activities on my unit concerning the New Deal. Students learn about the basic New Deal programs, including their advantages and disadvantages, while simultaneously working to improve their decision-making skills.

DECISION MAKING

What Is Decision Making?

As explained in Student Handout 1, decision making involves making a choice when there is no clearly correct answer. Students can derive important lessons about decision making from encountering "messy" problems like these. Even where outcomes do not show a particular choice to be clearly right or wrong, students will still be surprised by some aspects of the outcomes and thereby gain insight into decision making.

Decision Making as Experience

As argued in Student Handout 1, the most powerful way to teach good decision making is through experience. People learn to make good decisions just by making decisions, period. Bad decisions are more instructive, perhaps, in making us more skeptical decision makers, but that isn't stressed in Student Handout 1. Examples from the teaching profession illustrate this negative-reinforcement aspect of decision making. Teachers who just put students into groups without giving specific directions quickly learn not to do it again. Lessons that don't work well are dropped or modified the next time around. Good teaching is basically good decision making, and good decision making is shaped rapidly by previous decisions.

Ordinary people, including students, have an optimistic tendency simply to assume their decisions will result in positive outcomes, rather than making an estimate of the probabilities of certain outcomes. Decision-making experts, on the other hand, have a much more realistic view of these probabilities, due in part to their greater experience with the types of problem with which they often deal. Experience teaches us to be more realistic about outcomes.

Just encountering the problems and outcomes in these books, therefore, can help students improve their decision-making skills in general.

Targeting Decision-Making Skills

As mentioned in Student Handout 1, these books go beyond just decision-making problems and their outcomes. They also provide teachers with a decision-making model and strategies for teaching the skills involved in decision making. Students learn a simple model that provides basic guidelines for making decisions. This model goes by the acronym **P-A-G-E** (as explained below and in Student Handouts 2 and 3), and it gives support and guidance for student decisions, allows for communication built around specific skills and a common vocabulary, and provides specific criteria for teachers to evaluate student progress on those skills.

It's crucial for the teacher to act as a coach and guide students as they encounter the decision-making problems, in what Reuven Feuerstein refers to as "mediated learning." The teacher's guidance and questions can help students make sense of what they are thinking when they make decisions about historical situations.

The debate among researchers about the relative power of experience versus instruction on decision making is not crucial to these books. Rather, the problems and lessons in these books allow teachers to combine experience and instruction in the form of mediated learning (coaching).

Repetition in Order to Master Skills

These books are based on the hypothesis that several repetitions of decision-making problems and outcomes help improve decision making. That is, a person who has tried 50 problems will most likely have improved his/her decision-making skills more than a person who has tried only ten problems, simply because he or she has had more experience making decisions. There are many problems included in these books, and teachers are encouraged to use them regularly (once or twice per week, perhaps) as warm-ups to start classes or units. It isn't expected, however, that teachers will necessarily use all the problems.

Having experience with a large number of problems also provides students with more historical analogies upon which they can draw. It is striking how often decision makers base their thinking on an analogy (usually a recent one) in looking for ideas to help decide a problem. Having a broader range of analogies allows students to be more skeptical of any analogy suggested, since students are more likely to think of different analogies than the ones offered.

Though many experiences with decision making will help, it is essential that teachers coach students (mediated learning) and have time to reflect on their thinking during decision-making problems. Metacognition (thinking about our own thinking) is vital for improving thinking skills, according to numerous writers. Teachers should therefore allow "postmortem" time after each experience for students to reflect on their thinking, either verbally or in writing (see the section on evaluation for ideas). Teachers are also

encouraged to use some of the lessons for lengthier (1–3 class periods), more in-depth analysis of student thinking and the historical topics involved; perhaps two or three lessons could be used for in-depth analysis per semester.

Individual Choice Versus Historical Context

Research indicates that students generally view the role of individual choices as critical to historical events (for example, viewing Rosa Parks as an important catalyst for the civil rights movement), while professional historians stress the importance of underlying forces (for example, African Americans fighting in World War II, the Cold War, etc. as important causes of the civil rights movement). Students often miss the significance of these underlying forces and do not always recognize the extent to which historical context has constrained the actions of people in the past.

By focusing on decisions by individuals and by groups, the books in this series may seem to perpetuate an overemphasis on the individual vs. historical forces. However, the lessons in these books help students see more historical context, not less. In order to make good decisions, students need to learn a great deal of historical context. All lessons in this book require students to ask questions about context. Each lesson includes a short outcome and a question about why students think that option was tried (e.g., "The Congress rejected the 1790 petition to end slavery. Why do you think it was rejected? Which historical forces at the time led to this outcome?"). Each problem also asks students to think about the historical forces that made it difficult for the individual to make a good decision. In addition, many problems include multiple points of view, which enrich student understanding of context. Finally, students discuss the ways in which the actual historic decision was similar to or different from the decision they made; this emphasizes the role of context in shaping individual choices.

STRATEGIES

The basic format of the lessons, as explained in the overview, is problem, decision, outcome, discussion. However, many of the subskills of decision making are difficult for students to master. In order to assist students, many lessons put these subskills in a sort of multiple-choice format. For example, to improve the "asking for more information" skill, some lessons include a list of questions from which students can select the ones they wish to ask. To improve "identifying underlying problems," some lessons list possible underlying problems. To improve "considering other points of view," some lessons include handouts that put students into different roles (for example, not just looking at labor strike problems from the point of view of the workers, but from the point of view of the owners as well).

GOALS

The books in this series have four main goals:

1. **Make history more interesting:**
   Simply giving students the problems, having them make decisions, and then telling them what the people involved actually did will keep student interest high. It's exciting to make decisions before you know what the historical figures actually did. It's dynamic, open-ended learning. Students enjoy comparing their decisions to those of their classmates and to the decisions actually made by the historical figures. Even if you decide to use the lessons without giving instruction on how to perform the skills involved in decision making, students will still enjoy learning history this way.

   This increased interest should also lead to increased reading comprehension. After all, when students read their texts they will actively search for what actually happened and will want to compare it with what they chose.

2. **Improve decision making through experience:**
   The primary way people learn to make better decisions is through the process of making decisions, both good and bad. Students therefore become more sophisticated decision makers with every choice they make. By giving students many chances to make decisions where they can learn from mistakes and surprises, we can speed up the process of making them savvy decision makers. For example, students who decide to have a foreign government overthrown and see many negative consequences will think twice before trying that again, and will be skeptical of such a plan if proposed in the present day. Experience itself becomes the teacher.

3. **More complex ethical thinking:**
   Ethical questions will arise regularly, and by discussing their positions students will develop more complex ethical arguments and understandings. Please note, however, that these lessons are not aimed primarily at ethical reasoning. Teachers who want to focus primarily on this should consult *Reasoning with Democratic Values* (two volumes; by Alan Lockwood and David Harris, New York: Teacher's College Press, 1985).

4. **Improve the use of decision-making skills and reflection on those skills:**
   As much as students can improve their decision making through experience, they will develop it that much more if they learn specific subskills, which can then become guidelines for thinking through decision-making problems more carefully. The instruction in these books is based on the skills of the **P-A-G-E** model. The specific elements of **P-A-G-E** are described in the section "Guide to Better Decision Making," and the strategies for teaching those skills are explained below in the section "Teaching Specific Decision-Making Skills."

One of the teaching strategies emphasizes journal writing, in which students reflect on the problems they encounter, including how they could improve their own decision making. If teachers can get them to reflect on how to improve upon decisions they've just made, students will learn to be more reflective in general.

Ideally, we want to train future citizens to approach decision-making problems by asking insightful questions, carefully probing for underlying problems, seeing a problem from a variety of perspectives, setting clear and realistic goals, and imagining consequences.

EXPLANATION OF P-A-G-E FOR TEACHERS

(See Student Handouts 1–3)

Good decision making involves a number of subskills. The more students can use the subskills, the more complex their thinking will be when they make decisions. In order to help students recall the subskills involved in decision making, these books offer a simple acronym—**P-A-G-E**. The acronym is only meant to help students recollect the subskills rather than provide an actual formula for making decisions; decision-making problems are too complex and varied for step-by-step formulas. For instance, in one problem, students will need to focus on envisioning unintended consequences, while in another, historical context will be more important. Research indicates that expert decision makers don't follow step-by-step models. The **P-A-G-E** acronym consists of guidelines only, not specific steps or points that must be followed.

PROBLEM

Student Handout 3, "P-A-G-E Explanations and Examples," discusses the specific parts of **P-A-G-E.** The first section focuses on analyzing the problem, explaining what some experts call "framing." Framing seems to have a variety of meanings for different people. The handout emphasizes finding the underlying problem in an attempt to keep things simple for students. It also asks, "What's really going on here?" in order to help students uncover underlying problems.

According to Gary Klein, experts (people with a great deal of experience in a particular field, such as nursing, firefighting, or chess) "recognize" particular problems as being of one type or another. Once they make this recognition (i.e., once they frame it or represent it a particular way), experts can make very quick and successful decisions—that's why they're experts! In making these recognitions, experts draw upon analogies they've learned through experience. Thus, the section of the handout that discusses framing is related to the section on analogies. Experiments with expert chess players have shown that recognition is extremely important. When pieces were placed on a board in completely random fashion, experts could remember the placement no better than novices. But when the pieces were arranged in a way similar to placements in a game, experts could remember the placements with a single glance and project ahead several possible moves.

How students see or frame a problem depends partly on how the problem is worded. To help students become more aware of wording, some problems are phrased in two different ways: for example, half the class could get the problem worded using positive language, while the other half gets it worded with negative language. After students make their decisions, the class can discuss the effects of different wording on their decisions. Was it a big factor?

Political Scientist James Voss believes that the way people perceive problems in foreign policy acts as a key variable in the decisions they make. He believes that problem representation (which is similar to framing) constrains what we do thereafter. For example, if we see a problem as a case of communist aggression, we will make different choices than if we see it as a typical boundary dispute between neighboring countries. Questions included with some problems help students become more attuned to problem representation.

The section on assumptions is greatly simplified compared to the literature on assumptions, which delineates several different types of assumptions (presuppositions, working assumptions, etc.). The primary method used in these books to teach students to recognize their own assumptions is by asking them to identify which of a specific menu of assumptions they made. When they see a list of possible assumptions, they can better recognize which ones they've made. This strategy seems more effective than having students read a lengthy explanation on types of assumptions.

ASK FOR INFORMATION

Asking questions is crucial in good decision making. The more people know about background sources and context, the better they will understand the real problem.

The "Guide to Thoughtful Decision Making" also emphasizes asking questions about analogies ("How is the historical case different from this decision-making problem?"), but you should also encourage students to think of historical analogies in the first place. Students will often think about a problem in terms of a personal analogy: for example, "I don't like it when people criticize me, so it's wrong for a country to make a harsh speech against another country." Probing for personal or historical analogies, teachers should ask students where they got their ideas about what is really going on in a problem.

GOALS

The section on goals includes setting clear, realistic goals and generating numerous options for accomplishing those goals. Questions about ethicality have also been included in this section, since ethics are related to setting goals.

EFFECTS

The section on effects/consequences includes both long-term, unintended consequences and short-term possibilities of what could go wrong. Gary Klein argues that the ability to

run mental simulations—that is, to envision what could go wrong and to imagine positive and negative consequences—is a vital skill in decision making. Every decision-making problem in this series emphasizes unintended consequences and things that could go wrong.

EVALUATING STUDENTS

There are numerous ways to evaluate student progress in both content and decision-making skills. Here are a few examples:

- Quiz students on the vocabulary included in the relevant lesson(s)
- Have each student keep a decision-making log, as outlined in Student Handout 3. It's a good idea to copy the handout onto colored paper: you can then tell students after analyzing the outcome of a problem to turn to their green (for example) decision-making log sheet and record their thoughts. The right column requires students to reflect on their thinking.
- Have students keep a journal in which they comment on:
- the decision actually made in history
    - what the actual decision makers did well or poorly
    - historical constraints on the decision makers
    - what the outcome of the decision reveals about that time period
    - the decision made by the student and what he/she did well or poorly
    - the "lessons" of this decision-making problem
- Have students write a "history" of an event after the class has participated in a decision-making problem on that event and has discussed the outcome. I've required students to include at least two elements of **P-A-G-E** in their historical analysis.
- As a test question, have students make a decision about a problem you haven't used in class. Give them the problem and instruct them to make a decision and explain their thinking according to **P-A-G-E**. You have criteria in the suggested answers for grading their work.

EVALUATION TIPS FOR STUDENT HANDOUT 5

Here are some criteria to consider in grading student responses to the thinking of Zachariah Allen in 1835. Students need only get five criteria, and they only need to suggest ideas for each criterion. So, for example, I give full credit to students who suggest any possible underlying problem, or ask any reasonable question. The question in this analysis is: Which of these did Zachariah Allen consider?

- **Underlying problem:**
  1. Insurance companies had no incentive to use safety features to cut the number of fires. The more fires, the higher rates the insurance companies could charge.
  2. Textile companies had no incentives to put in safety features, since it wouldn't cut their insurance rates
- **Other points of view:**
  1. Workers wanted safety features
  2. Consumers wanted cheaper cloth, which would have been gained by fewer fires and lower insurance costs
  3. Investors wanted higher dividends, which would have been achieved by cutting insurance costs
  4. Textile producers in other countries would have hoped for no reforms, so they could sell more cloth in the American market (due to higher costs for American producers)
- **Recognize assumptions or emotions:**
  1. Did Allen assume that nothing could be done? That he was stuck with the existing insurance companies?
  2. Did Allen become so angry that he couldn't think of a solution to the problem?
- **Ask questions about context:**
  1. How many insurance companies were there?
  2. Was there a law that textile companies had to have insurance through the existing companies? (No)
  3. If Allen had a fire and didn't have insurance, would the government have helped pay for his losses? (No)
- **Ask about analogies:**
  (Give no credit if students do not discuss differences or similarities between the two cases.)
  1. Workers' cooperatives had the same purpose (mutual protection), so cooperatives might have worked for textile companies
  2. There were fewer companies in the mutual insurance scheme than there were workers in cooperatives, so they were more likely to be well-organized but didn't spread the risk out as much
- **Ask about reliability of sources:**
  1. The insurance agent was reliable in that he didn't care about Allen's situation
  2. The insurance agent was unreliable in implying that his insurance company was the only option, other than going without insurance

- **What are my goals and are they realistic?**
  (Give no credit if students do not discuss how realistic the goal is.)
  1. The goals of cutting insurance costs and making textile factories safer were very realistic. Allen accomplished these goals through a creative solution.
- **Generate alternative options:**
  1. Allen did a great job in generating an alternative to accomplishing his goals
- **Play out the options:**
  1. Allen seemed to consider that mutual insurance would provide the incentive to bring about safety features and thereby reduce insurance costs
- **Anticipate consequences/effects (long term):**
  1. The long-term effects of mutual insurance were numerous. Fewer fires meant more production of cloth.
  2. Workers were safer and more productive
  3. American textile companies were more competitive
  4. Mutual insurance would be adopted in other industries

SOURCES

Baron, Jon and Rex Brown. *Teaching Decision-Making to Adolescents*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1991.

Beach, Lee Roy. *The Psychology of Decision Making*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1997, Chapters 1–7.

Bower, Bruce. "Where There's Smoke, There's Judgment: Seeing through Experts' Eyes." *Science News*. Vol. 154, No. 3, 1998, pp. 44–46.

Byrnes, James. *The Nature and Development of Decision-Making: A Self-Regulating Model*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 1988.

Byrnes, James and Bonita McClenny. "Decision-Making in Young Adolescents and Adults." *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*. Vol. 58, 1994, pp. 359–388.

Caine, Renate and Geoffrey. *Making Connections: Teaching and the Human Brain*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1991.

Carretero, Mario, Lilianna Jacott, Margaita Limon, Asuncion Lopez-Manjon, and Jose Leon. "Historical Knowledge: Cognitive and Instructional Implications." Chapter 15 in Carretero, Mario and James Voss, eds. *Cognitive and Instructional Processes in the Social Sciences*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1994.

Cohen, Marvin, Jared Freeman and Steve Wolf. "Metarecognition in Time-Stressed Decision Making: Recognition, Critiquing, and Correcting." *Human Factors*. Vol. 38, No. 2, 1996, pp. 206–219.

Costa, Arthur. "Mediating the Metacognitive," in Arthur Costa, ed. *Developing Minds: A Resource Book for Teaching Thinking*, Vol. 1. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1991, pp. 211–214.

Dean, David and Deanne Kuhn. *Direct Instruction vs. Discovery: The Long View.* Teacher's College, Columbia University. In press.

Feuerstein, Reuven, et al. *Instrumental Enrichment*. Baltimore: University Park Press, 1980.

George, Alexander, *Presidential Decision Making in Foreign Policy: The Effective Use of Information and Advice*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980.

Halpern, Diane. *Thought and Knowledge: An Introduction to Critical Thinking*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1984.

Janis, I. and L. Mann. *Decision Making: A Psychological Analysis of Conflict, Choice, and Commitment*. NY: Macmillan, 1977.

Janis, I. *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascos*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982.

Klein, Gary. "Applications of Analogical Reasoning." *Metaphor and Symbolic Activity*. Vol. 2, No. 3, 1987, pp. 201–218.

Klein, Gary. "Characteristics of Skilled Option Generation in Chess." *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*. Vol. 62, No. 1, 1995, pp. 63–69.

Klein, Gary, Roberta Calderwood, and Donald MacGregor. "Critical Decision Method for Eliciting Knowledge." *IEEE Transactions on Systems, Man, and Cybernetics*. Vol. 19, No. 3, May/June, 1989, pp. 462–472.

Klein, Gary. *Sources of Power: How People Make Decisions*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998.

Kuhn, Deanne. "Do Cognitive Changes Accompany Developments in the Adolescent Brain?" *Perspectives on Psychological Science*. Vol. 1, No. 1, January, 2006, pp. 59–67.

Kuhn, Deanna, Michael Weinstock, and Robin Flaton. "Historical Reasoning as Theory-Evidence Coordination." Chapter 16 in Carretero, Mario and James Voss, eds. *Cognitive and Instructional Processes in the Social Sciences*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1994.

Leinhardt, Gaea, Catherine Stainton, Salim Virji, and Elizabeth Odoroff. "Learning to Reason in History: Mindlessness to Mindfulness." Chapter 6 in Carretero, Mario and James Voss, eds. *Cognitive and Instructional Processes in the Social Sciences*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1994.

Levstik, Linda and Keith Barton. *Doing History*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2001.

Lynch, C. L., Wolcott, S. K., & Huber, G. E. "Tutorial for Optimizing and Documenting Open-ended Problem Solving Skills." January, 2002.

Neustadt, Richard and Ernest May. *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision Makers*. NY: Free Press, 1988.

O'Reilly, Kevin. "Infusing Critical Thinking into United States History Courses," in Arthur Costa, ed. *Developing Minds: A Resource Book for Teaching Thinking*, Vol. 1. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1991, pp. 164–168.

O'Reilly, Kevin. "Thinking, Viewing, and Deciding: Strategies in United States History," in *Teaching Social Studies: Portraits from the Classroom*, National Council for the Social Studies, Bulletin No.82, 1988.

Paul, Richard. "Teaching Critical Thinking in the Strong Sense," in Arthur Costa, ed. *Developing Minds: A Resource Book for Teaching Thinking*, Vol. 1. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1991, pp.77–84.

Swartz, Robert. "Infusing the Teaching of Critical Thinking into Content Instruction," in Arthur Costa, ed. *Developing Minds: A Resource Book for Teaching Thinking*, Vol. 1. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1991, pp. 177–184.

Voss, James, Christopher Wolfe, Jeanette Lawrence, and Randi Engle. "From Representation to Decision: An Analysis of Problem Solving in International Relations," in Robert Sternberg, *Complex Problem Solving*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1991, pp. 119–158.

Voss, James. "Issues in the Learning of History." *Issues in Education*. Vol. 4, No. 2, 1998, pp. 163–209.

Wineburg, Samuel. *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001.

Wineburg, Samuel. "Introduction: Out of Our Past and into Our Future—The Psychological Study of Learning and Teaching History." *Educational Psychologist*. Vol. 29, No. 2, 1994, pp. 57–60.

GUIDE TO THOUGHTFUL DECISION MAKING

Student Handout 1

Welcome to "Foresight" History!

The problems in the *Decision Making in United States History* series will challenge you to make choices about events in United States history before you know what actually happened in those events. This is learning history in a foresighted way—first you decide, then you find out what really happened—rather than hindsight history, where you just find out what happened. You will get at least two benefits from this method of learning history: first, you will improve your decision-making skills. Someday, when you avoid buying a "lemon" used car that would have wasted thousands of dollars, you can thank your history teacher for helping you build up your decision-making skills. Second, it's fun to learn history as though it's a cliffhanger mystery, where you're eager to find out if your decision worked or ended in disaster. But don't forget to concentrate on the actual historical decision that was made and how it turned out. You can learn a lot about your own decision making through these problems, but you're mainly in class to learn history and to understand what really happened, not what could have happened.

What is Decision Making?

You've learned about problem solving in other courses such as math and science, and you've encountered problem solving when you've tried to build something or fix something. Decision making resembles problem solving in some ways (for example, it involves defining a problem and thinking of alternatives) but it's different from problem solving in that there is no one right answer. The lessons in this book involve "messy" problems; even long after the event, people often disagree about what the best decision was or should have been.

Decision Making as Experience:

Experience teaches you how to make good decisions. Every decision that you make—whether good or bad—better equips you to make good decisions in the future. For example, you would probably feel safer being treated by a doctor who had a lot of experience than by a brand-new doctor. The historical problems your teacher gives you will provide you with experience in making decisions in general, and will help you become a better decision maker in your role as a citizen. You won't just have learned about history, you will have experienced it! For some of these lessons, you will feel that you've made good decisions; for others, you may feel that you've made errors in judgment. As you go along, try to reflect on your experiences as well as on your thinking about decision making.

P-A-G-E Guide to Decision Making:

While experience is the most important way to learn to make better decisions, it's also helpful to learn some basic decision-making skills so that you know what areas to target in order to improve your overall decision making. Handout 2 contains an acronym, **P-A-G-E**, that provides you with guidelines for making better decisions. These aren't rules you have to follow; they are just meant as helpful tips to help you improve your thinking about decision making.

Handout 3 explains and gives examples for each part of the **P-A-G-E** guide to decision making. Keep it in your notebook for reference as you make decisions about situations in U.S. History. Every single **P-A-G-E** guideline will not necessarily apply to each decision-making problem you encounter. You (with the assistance of your teacher) will have to determine which guidelines will work best with which problems.

P-A-G-E ANALYSIS FOR DECISION MAKING

Student Handout 2

Decision-Making Analysis:

P=Problem

- Identify any **underlying problem:** What's really going on here?
- Consider **other points of view:** How do others see this situation?
- What are my **Assumptions**? **Emotions**?

A=Ask for Information (about)

- **Historical context:** What is the history and context of this issue?
- **Reliability of sources:** Does my information come from experts on this topic? Do the sources have a reason to lie? Is the information supported by evidence?
- **Historical analogies:** What has been done in the past about situations like this? In what ways do these other situations differ from this situation?

G=Goals

- What are my main **goals**? Are they **realistic**?
- Generate **options** to help achieve my goals. Are they **ethical**?

E=Effects

- Predict **unintended consequences.** What are some long-term effects?
- **Play out the options.** What could go wrong?

P-A-G-E EXPLANATIONS AND EXAMPLES

Student Handout 3

PROBLEM:

Underlying problem:

Sometimes, a decision-making situation will seem very difficult until you recognize that an underlying problem exists. For example, suppose two people come in for marriage counseling because they have been arguing a lot about money. The counselor is going to look for an underlying problem (such as unfulfilled needs) that might have led to spending more money. A student doing poorly in school might turn things around by discovering she needs glasses—the underlying problem. Please remember that you should **not** just repeat or rephrase the problem: instead, you need to look for what's behind it, for what's causing it. Underlying problems are **not** openly given as part of the decision-making situation—you have to figure them out on your own.

Another way to think of this skill is "the ability to see what is really going on." Some people call this "framing" the problem: in other words, by putting a "frame" around the heart of the problem and excluding unimportant parts, you discover what's really important. You need to call on your own personal experiences in order to see what's really going on. In history, this is done by making analogies. In a sense, you need to say, "The problem we are facing now is like a problem people faced before [this is an analogy], so I'd better do *this*." The way you <u>see</u> (or frame, or represent) a problem influences the decision you eventually make.

<u>Example:</u>
Bob's grades have been much lower for the last three months in history class. He says he's bored in class, and he'll improve his grades when he really needs to.

List at least two possible underlying problems for Bob's lower grades. What's really going on?

Other points of view:

Other people are always involved in decisions in history. We need to consider their points of view as we make decisions about history, just as we need to consider other points of view in our own lives today.

<u>Example:</u>
My brother, Mark, is angry at me for borrowing his car three times. But he's wrong to be angry. I needed to get to work each time I borrowed the car.

Rewrite this problem from Mark's point of view.

What are my assumptions? Emotions?

Sometimes after we make a decision, we realize that we had made an assumption that we didn't even know we were making until it was too late.

Emotions are part of being human, so they represent a legitimate part of the decision-making process. We do, however, need to be aware of our emotions during the decision-making process. Emotions, especially frustration and anger, can sometimes lead us to make irrational choices. People frequently become frustrated and say, "I've had enough of this situation. Let's just do *something."* But they often come to regret the rushed choices they made under such circumstances. They would have benefited from saying to themselves, "Okay. I'm getting frustrated, but I still need to take the time necessary to make a good decision."

Studies have shown that when people feel pessimistic, or when they're in a bad mood, they exaggerate the possible negative consequences of decisions; similarly, when they feel optimistic or are in a good mood, they overestimate positive consequences.

Emotions and gut feelings are unavoidable and natural, but thinking the situation through is crucial to making good decisions. We wouldn't want the President to decide about nuclear missiles in Cuba based solely on his gut feeling—we'd want him to gather information, consider several options, predict the possible consequences for millions of people, and so forth. As decision makers, we need to account for the role of emotion and gut feelings in our decisions and be aware of them as we choose.

Example for assumptions:
Player to teammate: "We'll have no trouble beating Central. After all, Central lost to Suburban, and we beat Suburban the first game of the year."

What is this player assuming?

Example for emotions:
Suppose you have two children, and are trying to decide whether to buy life insurance. An insurance ad shows a boy who can't go to college because his father died and had no life insurance.

To what emotion does the ad appeal?

ASK:

Ask about historical context (history of the issue; context in the world):

Asking questions about both the historical background and the present context of a problem are both essential for getting the information necessary to make a good decision. If you don't know the background, you will have difficulty deciding on the best solution.

Every problem has a back story, and we need to find out what that story is. The key is to ask questions that will help you obtain the necessary information.

Example:
You are 17 years old, and you have been thinking about buying a car. You work part time after school, about ten hours per week. Your parents have told you that you'll have to pay for the car yourself. You go to a used car dealership and the salesman shows you a used car that costs $2000.

What questions should you ask before you buy it?

Ask about reliability of sources:

Information is crucial to making good decisions, but we need know what the sources of our information are and consider the reliability of those sources. Basing a decision on bad information from questionable sources is a recipe for disaster. You can evaluate sources by asking if the person giving the information has a reason to lie, if the person is a primary source, if other sources support this information, if the person is an expert on the topic, what the person's bias is on the topic, or if the person has been reliable in the past.

You should always be probing for disagreements among sources. Be wary if no disagreements seem to exist. It might mean your advisers are engaging in "groupthink," where they all get pulled to the same option without thoroughly thinking through other options or considering what could go wrong. Always try to find people who disagree with a proposed option. If you can't find one, ask tough questions yourself.

Example:
The car salesman says this used car is in perfect condition.

How reliable is the salesman? What reasons might you have to distrust him?

Ask about historical analogies:

It's natural to compare the problems we encounter to other, similar situations that have occurred in the past. In fact, one reason we study history in the first place is to build a deeper understanding of our world today through learning about historical events/ analogies. You should try to think of analogies to the problems you encounter. As mentioned above in the section on underlying problems, you derive your understanding of what is important in a problem (framing) from analogies. (Example: "This problem is like that situation George Washington was in at Trenton during the American Revolution.") The more you draw on your knowledge of history, the more likely you are to fully understand a decision-making problem.

However, analogies are tricky because important differences often exist between the problems we encounter now and the historical cases we use to guide our decisions. We

should always evaluate analogies by asking, "How do the two cases differ? In what ways are they similar? Are they similar enough to justify the conclusion?" We should also consider whether other, more appropriate analogies exist that could provide us with better guidance.

Example:
Suppose you drove in a race at a parking lot near a mall a month ago. You raced your five-year old Toyota Corolla, and your time was 36.8 seconds. Margaret told you that she drove in a race last Sunday and her time was 28.2 seconds. She says this proves she is a better race driver than you are.

What are two questions you could ask to determine whether Margaret is really a better driver?

GOALS:

What are my main goals? Are they realistic?

We can't make good decisions if we are unclear about our goals. Once we establish goals, we can more easily set priorities use them as a basis for choosing between options.

However, establishing goals isn't enough. The goals we set need to be realistic. Some decisions in history have been catastrophic because the decision makers didn't notice that they had unrealistic goals. It didn't matter how carefully they exercised their other decision-making skills—because their goals were unrealistic, they would never achieve them.

Example:
You're out of school and need a job, since you live on your own and have expenses (rent, car payments, food, heat, insurance, etc.). You've got two offers. The first one is close to where you live and pays a lot more money, but it's doing work you wouldn't like. The second job is farther away and pays less money (but enough to cover your expenses), but it's doing something that you really like. What do you do?

After you decide, list your goals and ask how realistic they are.

Generate options to help achieve my goals. Are they ethical?

After you've made a decision, you don't want to be stuck thinking, "Oh, I wish I'd thought of that option before I decided!" At the same time, though, you don't want to become paralyzed trying to think of every possible option, no matter how remote. However, important decisions should spur us to take the time to consider a number of options.

Example:
You are 25 years old, single, work full-time ten miles from where you live, and drive your compact car to work. In recent months, gas prices have risen to very high levels. Your main goal at this point is to save money.

What options do you have for coping with these price increases?

EFFECTS:

Predict unintended consequences:

Most of the time, predicting unintended consequences will be more important than any other thinking you do about a problem. For some problems, it may be enough just to see the situation from other points of view or to ask questions about background or context. However, considering consequences will do more to help you avoid that awful feeling you get when you've made a bad decision.

Example:
Suppose you are 35 years old and have a son and a daughter, aged five and two. The company you work for is asking you to move to a different state. You can refuse and take a pay cut.

If you make the move, what unintended consequences might it have on you and your family in ten years? Guess at what the effects of the move might be.

Play out the option. What could go wrong?

Here, you need to think about short-term effects, as opposed to predicting unintended consequences, which focuses more on long-term effects. For example, say you're playing the role of president and decide to get a law passed to help solve a problem. You have to take into account the fact that Congress has the constitutional power to pass laws, and thus to get your law enacted you need to convince Congress to approve it. By noticing that the approval of Congress is vital to the success or failure of your decision, you've identified something that could go wrong, and need to plan accordingly (overcoming opposition by talking to individual members of Congress, thinking of another option as backup, etc.).

Example:
Suppose you are 30 years old and working at a job you like pretty well. You get an offer to work at a job for higher pay that is further away.

If you take the job, what might happen? List two or more things that could go wrong.

DECISION-MAKING LOG

Student Handout 4

Topic	Actual decision	My decision	Why different/similar?	What I learned about P-A-G-E from this topic (two examples)

EVALUATE DECISION MAKING

Student Handout 5

Fire was a big problem in textile mills in the 1830s, since cotton fibers are highly flammable. Zachariah Allen, the owner of a cotton textile mill, made many improvements to prevent or limit fires. For example, he put in fireproof doors and stairways to allow for the safe exit of workers. As a result, he didn't have any serious fires for three years.

Nevertheless, he paid the same rates for fire insurance as all other factories, including some that had not taken any precautions against fires. When he confronted the insurance company about the same rates, the insurance agent responded, "A cotton mill is a cotton mill. We average them all together." When Allen said it wasn't fair, the insurance agent said that Allen could go without insurance if he didn't like the rates, but that he wouldn't advise it.

Zachariah Allen decided to organize mutual insurance, in which owners of safer mills combine to insure themselves. The mutual insurance system solved several problems: First, it spread the risk out, so no one mill would be forced out of business due to a costly fire. Second, it gave incentive to each factory owner to take safety precautions against fire. As safety features were incorporated that reduced the number of fires, each factory owner saved money through lower insurance payments.

Analyze Zachariah Allen's decision to form a mutual insurance system, according to five or more criteria from P-A-G-E (listed on Handout 2). These are not the main four letters of P-A-G-E, but the ten criteria under the main letters. For example, you wouldn't be using "Problem," but one of the three criteria under "Problem," such as "What are my assumptions?" Write each of the five criteria as a separate paragraph.

After you have written your analyses based on five or more criteria, write your overall judgment of Allen's decision in one paragraph. How well did he do?

P:

A:

G:

E:

ANTEBELLUM AMERICA

Introduction

OVERVIEW

This volume on antebellum America consists of eight lessons on reforms in the Jacksonian era, the Mexican War, and sectional conflicts leading to the Civil War. As in the other volumes, no effort is made to cover all the major topics in this time period. Rather, lessons were chosen around interesting decision-making problems.

SKILLS GRID FOR THIS VOLUME

X = part of lesson
E = emphasized in the lesson

	Lessons							
Skill	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
Underlying problem	X	X		X	E	X	X	X
Point of view		X		X	X	X		X
Assumptions/emotions		X		X		X		X
Ask—context	X	E	X	X	X	X	X	E
Ask—sources	X		E			E		
Ask—analogies		X			X		X	
Goals? Realistic?	E	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Options. Ethical?		X		X		E	X	X
Unintended consequences		X		E	X	E	X	E
Play out options		X		X	X	X	E	X

LESSON 1: ELECTION OF 1828

Teacher Pages

OVERVIEW

The 1828 election really began with the disputed 1824 election, as Andrew Jackson charged there was a "corrupt bargain" to steal the election from him. There were distinct differences between Jackson and John Quincy Adams over the role of the national government, so voters had a clear choice. Who will students choose?

VOCABULARY

- Internal improvements—Roads and canals built with the help of the government
- Tariff—A tax on imports
- Bank of the United States—National bank to help the economy grow. The national government deposits 20% of the money in the bank.
- Bankruptcy—When a person cannot pay off his or her loans
- Debtors' prison—A jail for people who do not repay their loans
- Monroe Doctrine—A United States policy stating that European countries could no longer colonize the Western Hemisphere
- Corrupt bargain—Accusation by Andrew Jackson that John Adams and Henry Clay had made a deal to cheat Jackson out of winning the 1824 election
- "Old Hickory"—Nickname for Andrew Jackson
- Andrew Jackson—Democrat who won the 1828 election
- John Quincy Adams—Won the 1824 election, but lost in 1828
- Spoils system—Replacing officeholders with loyal supporters
- Veto—When the president refuses to sign a bill. Congress can override the veto with a two-thirds vote.
- "Trail of Tears"—Thousands of Native Americans died when they were forced to move to Indian Territory (Oklahoma).
- King Andrew I—The opposition party argued that Andrew Jackson thought himself a king, and therefore called him King Andrew I

DECISION-MAKING SKILLS EMPHASIZED

- Identify underlying problems
- Ask about context
- Ask about reliability of sources
- Set realistic goals

LESSON PLAN

A. IN-DEPTH LESSON (one 40-minute class period)

Procedure**:**

Give students Handout 1, which will familiarize them with the candidates. Have the students vote and predict who won the actual election. Tell them who the candidates were and that Andrew Jackson (Candidate B) won, as noted in Handout 2. Ask students if they think he would be a good or bad president for the country based on the description in Handout 1. Distribute Handout 2 and ask students if any of these outcomes surprised them.

OPTIONAL: After the analysis of the election, you could ask students how many support Adams's various proposals—especially internal improvements, the protective tariff, and continuing the national bank.

Reflecting on Decision Making:

Ask students what they would have done differently, if anything, now that they know the outcomes. Which decision-making skills were especially important in making decisions about these issues? Which of the letters of **P-A-G-E** applied especially to this problem? (See the "Decision-Making Analysis" section below for ideas.) Ask students what they did well or on poorly in terms of the **P-A-G-E** analysis of decision making. Discuss their answers.

Putting the Actual Decisions Into Historical Context:

Ask students: Were they surprised that Candidate B won? Why or why not? Their answers will reveal the extent to which they see historical forces at work. For example, now white men who did not own land could vote. Would most of these new voters likely support Jackson or Adams? Suppose women, African Americans or Native Americans could have voted. How would that have changed the election?

Connecting to Today:

To what extent are the issues of government spending on internal improvements (roads, bridges, etc.) and the tariff still important? To what extent are candidates still subject to personal attacks? Should that be a part of elections?

Troubleshooting:

Some students may have difficulty understanding bankruptcy laws. Use an example from an economics book to illustrate how bankruptcy works.

B. QUICK MOTIVATOR (10–15 minutes)

Give Handout 1 for homework. In class, have students pair up and discuss their choices for three minutes or so. Ask for a show of hands for each candidate and briefly discuss their reasons.

TEACHER NOTES FOR EXPANDING DISCUSSION

(For outcomes for students, see Handout 2)

Many disagree on the success of John Quincy Adams's presidency. Most see him as a great failure, while historian Daniel Walker Howe argues that Adams's policies were actually best for the nation.

All historians agree that the 1828 election was one of the dirtiest elections in American history. The mudslinging is reflected in this lesson in the number of personal attacks launched against each candidate.

DECISION-MAKING ANALYSIS:

P = Problem
* **- Identify any underlying problem(s)**
  - Consider other points of view
  - What are my assumptions? Emotions?

A = Ask for information (about)
* - Historical context (history of this issue; context in the world)
* - Reliability of sources
  - Historical analogies

G = Goals
* - What are my main goals? Are they realistic?
  - Generate options to achieve these goals. Are they ethical?

E = Effects
  - Predict unintended consequences.
  - Play out the options. What could go wrong?

*Denotes topics emphasized in this lesson

- **Identify any underlying problem:** To what extent is Adams limited by his upper-class background? To what extent is Jackson limited by his background in fighting Native Americans? Are these important factors in the quality of a candidate? What underlying changes were taking place in American society that might make one candidate more suited to be president?
- **Ask about context:** Historical context is very important to this election, as non-landowning white males could now vote in many states. How did this affect the election? Students could ask if federal aid for internal improvements has led to corruption in the past. (Yes.) A major question is whether all these programs proposed by Adams are constitutional. The question was part of an ongoing debate about how much power the constitution gives the national government.

- **Ask about reliability of sources:** One issue is whether all these personal charges are true. The charges about Jackson's mother, about the public paying for Adams's billiard table, about a corrupt bargain, and about Adams getting a mistress for the tsar were not true. The charge about Jackson and his wife living together before her divorce was final was true. Jackson did gamble, drink, and get into duels. The other charges are not clearly true or false, or are open to interpretation. In each case, students should ask about the source for these charges. (In most cases, journalists made the claims based on incomplete evidence, so the sources are weak.)
- **Reflect on your goals:** Is the primary goal to elect someone with strong character, good decision-making skills, and the right positions on important issues? Each candidate differed in these qualities; the voters had a clear choice.

SOURCES

"1828 Election." *The American Presidency Project*. Available at http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/showelection.php?year=1828.

"Andrew Jackson." *The White House*. Available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/aj7.html.

"Andrew Jackson (1767–1845): Elections and Campaigns." *Miller Center of Public Affairs.* Available at http://millercenter.org/academic/americanpresident/jackson/essays/biography/3

Cole, Donald. *The Presidency of Andrew Jackson*. Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1993, Chapter 14.

Hargreaves, Mary. *The Presidency of John Quincy Adams*. Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1985, Chapter 12.

Henretta, James, et al. *America's History*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000, Volume 1, pp. 351–367.

Howe, Daniel Walker. *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815–1848.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, Chapter 7.

"John Quincy Adams." *The White House*. Available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/ja6.html.

Lewis, Jams. *John Quincy Adams: Policymaker for the Union.* Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2001, Chapter 5.

Remini, Robert. *Andrew Jackson and His Indian Wars*. New York: Penguin, 2001, pp. 220–225.

Remini, Robert. *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Freedom, 1822–1832*. New York: Harper and Row, 1981, Chapters 6–9.

Remini, Robert. *The Election of Andrew Jackson*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1963, Chapter 6.

Remini, Robert. *John Quincy Adams*. New York: Times Book, 2002, Chapters 6–10.

Richards, Leonard. "The Jacksonians and Slavery", in Lewis Perry and Michael Fellman, ed., *Antislavery Reconsidered*. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1979, pp. 99–118.

LESSON 1: ELECTION OF 1828

Vocabulary

- Internal improvements—Roads and canals built with the help of the government
- Tariff—A tax on imports
- Bank of the United States—National bank to help the economy grow. The national government deposits 20% of the money in the bank.
- Bankruptcy—When a person cannot pay off his or her loans
- Debtors' prison—A jail for people who do not repay their loans
- Monroe Doctrine—A United States policy stating that European countries could no longer colonize the Western Hemisphere
- "Corrupt bargain"—Accusation by Andrew Jackson that John Adams and Henry Clay had made a deal to cheat Jackson out of winning the 1824 election
- "Old Hickory"—Nickname for Andrew Jackson
- Andrew Jackson—Democrat who won the 1828 election
- John Quincy Adams—Won the 1824 election, but lost in 1828
- Spoils system—Replacing officeholders with loyal supporters
- Veto—When the president refuses to sign a bill. Congress can override the veto with a two-thirds vote.
- "Trail of Tears"—Thousands of Native Americans died when they were forced to move to Indian Territory (Oklahoma).
- King Andrew I—The opposition party argued that Andrew Jackson thought himself a king, and therefore called him King Andrew I

LESSON 1: ELECTION OF 1828

HANDOUT 1: PROBLEM

ANTEBELLUM AMERICA

Election of 1828

You are a voter in 1828, and you have to decide which of the major candidates to support.

Candidate A:

Positions on issues:

1. He supports federal (national) government spending for a coordinated network of internal improvements (roads and canals), the money to be raised from the sale of western lands. He claims that the roads and canals will tie the nation together, overcoming regional differences (North vs. South, East vs. West). Congress has allocated money for internal improvements, but not a coordinated pattern to connect the nation, and not this amount of money.
2. He supports a high tariff on some products to encourage and protect American manufacturing. He signed the Tariff of 1828, which increased import taxes on many farm and manufactured products. Leaders in the South hated the tariff, calling it the "Tariff of Abominations." Southern cotton needed no tariff protection, while the tariff increased the prices Southerners paid for other goods (cloth, for example) by $100 million.
3. He wants to promote the arts and literature. He has proposed a national observatory for making discoveries about the stars and sky. He also wants a national university in Washington and uniform standards of weights and measures. The national observatory, national university, and uniform measures proposals were defeated in Congress, but he still supports them.
4. He supports continuing the Bank of the United States. This national bank helps promote investments in American business and keeps the supply of money stable.
5. He has supported a naval academy, similar to West Point for the army. Congress did not approve the academy.
6. He has supported a national bankruptcy law. People who can't pay their bills are often sent to jail (debtors' prison). This law would allow them to declare bankruptcy, after which they would pay lenders a portion of what they owe (determined by a judge based on what they could afford) and then their debts would be cleared. This proposal was defeated in Congress.
7. He supports stronger patent laws to help inventors make more money from their discoveries.
8. He has supported a new Department of the Interior to explore all areas of the country, especially the West. This proposal was defeated in Congress.

9. He said Congress should start these many programs, and not be held back by a lack of ambition among the people
10. As president, he sided with Creek Indians to prevent the Creeks from being moved out of Georgia by the state government. However, he eventually gave in and the Creeks were moved out.
11. He told Congress that he had agreed to send representatives from the United States to a conference in Panama to discuss matters of concern with countries of South America. He asked the Senate to confirm the representatives.
12. He does not feel elected officials should always follow the preferences of the voters in their districts.

Personal characteristics:

1. He is the incumbent president, running for reelection
2. He believes in personal improvement. He gets up one-and-a-half hours before dawn every morning, walks four miles, studies three chapters of the Bible, and reads newspapers and public documents before eating breakfast. He works until 4pm, and then walks three miles or swims in the Potomac River, weather permitting. He eats dinner from 5pm to 6:30, after which he talks with his wife, plays billiards, or writes in his diary until 11pm or midnight. He is a strict father who once told his children in college that he did not wish to see them at Christmas because they were not working hard enough in their studies.
3. As president, he wanted qualified government officials, even if those officials did not support him politically. He refused to remove officials who supported the opposition party. He is from New England, is rich, and is well educated. His opponents say he made way too much money while president. They say, "We disapprove of the kingly pomp and splendor displayed" by Candidate A.
4. As secretary of state (before he was president), he negotiated possession of Florida from Spain and settled boundary disputes with Spain over Mexico and with Britain over Canada. He also started a new American policy to keep European countries from interfering in the Americas. As president, he was unable to convince the British to reopen trade from the British West Indies to the United States.
5. His opponents say he made a "corrupt bargain" to prevent Candidate B from winning the election in 1824. Candidate A allegedly made a deal with a leading congressman to let him be secretary of state if the congressman gave his votes to Candidate A in the House of Representatives. Since no candidate had achieved a majority of electoral votes, the election was decided in the House. Candidate A did win the House vote when the congressman's supporters switched to Candidate A, and the congressman was made secretary of state. Candidate B's supporters point out that Candidate B won the popular vote and had sufficient electoral votes.
6. His opponents made a number of claims:
    - He lived with his wife before they were married and was therefore immoral
    - He put a billiards table in the White House at public expense
    - He is educated but has no common sense
    - He is not a man of action

7. He is not exactly campaigning for reelection. He told a reporter, "If my country wants my services, she must ask for them." When supporters followed him one evening and asked him to address the crowd, he said, "Fellow-citizens, I thank you for this kind and friendly reception, and wish you all good night." He then went inside and went to bed.

Candidate B:

Positions on issues:

1. He says he will clean out corruption in government and preserve American freedom. He says the government provides "special privileges" for rich people. He will appoint new officials to represent ordinary people, instead of rich people.
2. He opposes the expansion of the national government under the proposals of Candidate A, such as internal improvements and the Bank of the United States. Each of these proposals will expand the national government and provide money for people with "connections."
3. He supports states' rights. He argues that states have the right to deal with Native Americans within their borders however they see fit, without interference from the national government. He believes that the governments should move Native Americans to sanctuaries in the West where they will be protected from any further land claims from white settlers.
4. He supports the high tariff but says it is too high on some products
5. He opposes sending U.S. representatives to conferences to discuss international matters. He believes it's this sort of discussion that leads to entangling agreements and alliances. He wants the U.S. to stay out of these international problems.
6. He claims he was cheated out of the presidency in 1824 by a "corrupt bargain" between Candidate A and another candidate (There were four candidates in 1824.)

Personal characteristics:

1. He is a war hero from the War of 1812. He led American soldiers to a great victory in the war and is known as "Old Hickory" because he is so tough
2. A rough man with little formal education, he is from Tennessee. Nevertheless, he is now a lawyer, cotton planter, and slaveholder. Unlike Candidate A, who came from a rich family, Candidate B rose from humble beginnings to become a rich man.
3. He has fought Native Americans, has killed several men in duels, and has had several men executed
4. His opponents say he is an adulterer because his wife was still married at the time he married her. Candidate B's wife obtained her divorce two years after she married Candidate B. Candidate B says he and his wife were unaware that the divorce hadn't been approved.
5. His opponents say he is an illiterate backwoodsman and a drunken gambler. Some opponents say he made a great deal of his money in land speculation. His supporters say he is a common man whose morals are simple and true, a

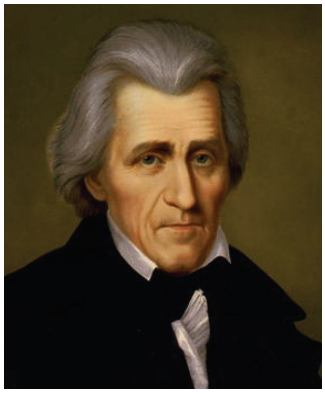
determined man of action. For example, he took in a dying stranger sent by a friend. He took care of the man for a few hours until he died.

6. An opposition newspaper says that Candidate B's "mother was a common prostitute, brought to this country by British soldiers! She afterward married a mulatto man, with whom she had several children," of which Candidate B is one. ("Mulatto" was a term once used for "biracial.")

Which candidate will you support and why? Who do you predict actually won the election?

LESSON 1: ELECTION OF 1828

Handout 2: Outcomes



Andrew Jackson

John Quincy Adams

Candidate B (Andrew Jackson) decisively won the election, 178 electoral votes against Candidate B's (John Quincy Adams) 83 electoral votes; Jackson won 56% of the popular vote to Adams's 44%. Jackson won because the Democratic Party was much more organized than the Republican Party and because of his personal popularity compared to Adams's social awkwardness. Many ordinary people, including Irish immigrants, did not identify with Adams's aristocratic tastes. Southerners were very hostile to Adams and his policies that seemed to favor the North and West. Meanwhile, slaveowners believed that Jackson, with his emphasis on states' rights, favored allowing slavery to continue unhindered by the national government. Jackson's election gave Southern slaveholders the confidence to continue to defend slavery.

The new president did carry out what he said he would do during the election campaign. Jackson removed people from office who were not loyal to the Democratic Party and replaced them with loyalists in a policy known as the "spoils system." He eventually killed the Bank of the United States by vetoing the bank's charter and by removing government money from the bank. He opposed the system of internal improvements by the national government; for example, he vetoed a bill to extend the National Road. However, he approved funding for many state and local internal improvements. When South Carolina nullified the tariff and refused to pay it, Jackson supported the tariff; however, he also got the tariff rates reduced to their 1816 levels.

Andrew Jackson's presidency was a disaster for Native Americans. He allowed states to move Native Americans to the West, eventually leading to the "Trail of Tears" in which thousands of Native Americans died in a forced removal. Whites who supported expansion agreed completely with President Jackson's policies with regard to Native Americans. Andrew Jackson's forceful executive actions led to a new opposition party that labeled him "King Andrew I," because they thought Jackson acted like a king.

The 1828 election was not decided primarily on policy issues, but rather on local issues, party organization, and peoples' perception of the two candidates. It was an important

election in restoring a system of two competitive parties, which, along with ending the requirement that white men own land in order to vote, greatly increased voter participation. To a very large extent, modern campaign techniques began during this election. It was one of the dirtiest campaigns in all of American history. John Quincy Adams wrote extensively in his diary about the low and baseless attacks on him. When Jackson's wife died the month after the election, Jackson also felt especially embittered, feeling that all the personal attacks on her had contributed to her demise. Both sides made negative personal attacks on the other candidate. The difference was the charges against Adams were false or were opinions, while the charges against Jackson (except about his mother) were true.

LESSON 2: ANTEBELLUM REFORMS

Teacher Pages

OVERVIEW

Antebellum America saw a wave of reforms. This lesson focuses on four: women's rights, temperance, minimizing crime, and improving education. The abolition of slavery was so important that it has a separate lesson devoted to it (Lesson 5); reforms regarding poverty and workers are included in Lesson 4.

VOCABULARY

- Antebellum—Refers to the decades before the Civil War in the United States
- Separate spheres—Men were involved in the business world, while women were restricted to the home
- Seneca Falls Convention—Women's rights advocates met in 1848 to declare their grievances
- Declaration of Sentiments—Declaration of women's grievances and demands for change adopted at Seneca Falls
- Literacy—The ability to read and write
- Apprenticeships—When a beginner (apprentice) trains and works with a master craftsman
- Suffrage—The right to vote
- Temperance—Reducing the consumption of alcohol
- Prohibition—Eliminating the sale of alcohol
- Public schools—Government-run education paid for by taxes

DECISION-MAKING SKILLS EMPHASIZED

- Identify underlying problems
- Consider other points of view
- Recognize assumptions
- Ask about context
- Ask about analogies
- Set realistic goals
- Generate options
- Predict unintended consequences
- Play out option

LESSON PLAN

A. IN-DEPTH LESSON (one 40-minute class period)

Procedure**:**

Distribute Handout 1 and divide students into small groups. Assign one of the four problems to each group. Give time for students to ask questions. After brainstorming possible solutions to their individual problems, have each group report its solutions to the whole class, including the solution(s) it favors. List the solutions on the board. Ask students if they set a goal before proposing options to achieve their goal. How do their proposed solutions match up with their goal? Many students will likely not have thought of a goal, so this question will be a helpful reminder. If they have not thought of goals, have students go back and set goals. Then have them reconsider their options in light of the goal(s).

OPTIONAL: Distribute Handout 2, which contains options for dealing with the issues of women's rights, alcohol, crime, and education. Have students discuss and decide if they will adopt each of these proposals. Bring the class together and have students vote on these options. Which do they favor and why? How did these proposals compare to student proposals?

Distribute Handout 3 with the actual antebellum reforms and outcomes. Discuss these outcomes. How do student proposals compare? What surprised students? Which programs did they predict would be adopted? At this point, you can distribute Handout 4 on the Declaration of Sentiments and have students analyze this important primary source. Alternatively, you could distribute Handout 4 before giving students the outcomes (Handout 3), so they could analyze the statements in the declaration prior to reading a summary of the outcomes.

Reflecting on Decision Making:

Ask students what they would have done differently, if anything, now that they know the outcomes. Which decision-making skills were especially important in making decisions about these issues? Which of the letters of **P-A-G-E** applied especially to this problem? (See the "Decision-Making Analysis" section below for ideas.) Ask students what they did well or poorly on in terms of the **P-A-G-E** analysis of decision-making. Discuss their answers.

Putting the Actual Decisions Into Historical Context:

Ask students what long-term historical trends were taking place that would lead to so many proposals for reform. (The United States was beginning to industrialize, and there were many changes in transportation and communication that were transforming society. The country was experiencing a religious revival, more people were living in cities, and immigrants were flooding into the country. These changes were causing difficulties for

many people. Naturally, to protect themselves from the negative effects of these changes, people responded by trying to reform the system. In a democratic society, people felt they had the power to make things better.)

Connecting to Today:

Which of these reform proposals are still with us today? What do the outcomes of the reforms show us? Should schools serve non-educational goals, such as patriotism or "Americanizing" immigrants? OPTION: Have students write a letter to their congressperson advocating a contemporary reform.

Troubleshooting:

Some students may wonder why, until the 1830s, people who fell into debt were thrown in jail, where they wouldn't be able to make any money to pay their debts. At the time, it was felt that a loan was a legal contract, and if you didn't pay it back you were committing a crime. Many people believed that putting people in jail for not paying off debts would deter people from defaulting.

B. QUICK MOTIVATOR (10–20 minutes)

Only assign one or two of the problems from Handout 1 for homework (along with Options from Handout 2 relating to that problem). In class, have students pair up and discuss their decision regarding the problem(s) for about two minutes. Ask students to vote on the various proposals. You could discuss the reasons for student votes, and possibly have students revote. Distribute Handout 3 and discuss these outcomes.

TEACHER NOTES FOR EXPANDING DISCUSSION

(For Outcomes for Students, see Handout 3)

Some historians see a connection between temperance and nativism (the anti-immigration policies of the Know-Nothing Party). But according to historian Ian Tyrrell (see sources), the connection was very weak. Many Know-Nothings opposed temperance, and most proponents of temperance were not involved with nativism, according to Tyrrell.

The prison system described in this lesson was called the "Auburn system," in which inmates worked in silence with other prisoners during the day and were isolated at night. A second system, which is not described in this lesson, was the Pennsylvania system, in which prisoners were isolated all day and night.

Historians emphasize that the motivation for education reform was much more complex than simply preparation for working in industrial factories. This complexity is reflected in the answers about context in the decision-making analysis below.

DECISION-MAKING ANALYSIS:

P = Problem
* **- Identify any underlying problem(s)**
- Consider other points of view
- What are my assumptions? Emotions?

A = Ask for information (about)
* - Historical context (history of this issue; context in the world)
- Reliability of sources
* **- Historical analogies**

G = Goals
* - What are my main goals? Are they realistic?
* **- Generate options to achieve these goals. Are they ethical?**

E = Effects
* **- Predict unintended consequences.**
* **- Play out the options. What could go wrong?**

*Denotes topics emphasized in this lesson

- **Identify any underlying problems:** An underlying problem for all the decisions was the changing American economy and society, which was causing some people to adjust and adapt. Part of this adjustment was the call for reform.
    - Women's rights: One of the underlying problems was the lack of political power that women had at the time

    - Crime: Rapid urbanization and immigration may have been contributing to increased crime
- **Consider other points of view:** Students should consider other points of view for all the problems, such as those of women, men, children, immigrants, Catholics, Protestants, non-religious people, the working class, middle class, and the rich. On prison reform, students should consider the point of view of Southern whites, who put an emphasis on race and on quick and violent justice.
- **Identify assumptions, emotions:** Students should consider their own assumptions, perhaps including that poor people are lazy; women are passive and frail; drinking alcohol either does or doesn't cause other problems, such as crime or abuse of women; criminals can or cannot be rehabilitated; immigrants increase crime; imprisonment is more humane and more effective than physical punishment; public education is or isn't worth the expense; individuals can learn knowledge and morals; state-run institutions are good or bad. Student assumptions may be correct. Students should be conscious of them. While the basis of education reform (that education could change people's beliefs and behaviors) was the assumption at the time, many people believed that character was primarily set at birth. Well-known clergyman Henry Ward Beecher argued that "the children of a sturdy thief, if taken from him at birth and reared by honest men would, doubtless, have to contend against a strongly dishonest inclination." The assumption of an inherited character was compounded by stereotypes of immigrants, as some ethnic groups were thought to be prone to crime, alcoholism, or stupidity, for example.
- **Ask about context:** Students could (and should) ask a number of questions about context:
    - In general: What is happening in terms of religion at that time? (American society has just experienced the Second Great Awakening, a religious revival emphasizing man's free will in making society better.) Why do people even care about reform? (In a democratic society, more people feel they have some say in making society better. People are less fatalistic in democratic societies.)
    - Women's rights: What historical context has led to the idea of reform for women? (The Declaration of Independence stressed equality, which helped promote the idea of equal rights for women. Women's involvement in other reforms, especially abolition, has made them more assertive. It makes sense that they would be assertive about their own rights.)
    - Alcohol: Why do people drink so much alcohol? (It seems to be cultural. In parts of the country, it is expected that men, at least, will drink alcohol. However, there may be more alcohol available because of high transportation costs. To avoid those costs, farmers convert their bulky grain into easy-to-transport alcohol. Immigration may be another cause, since some immigrant groups drink alcohol as a normal part of their daily life.)
    - Crime: What historical context has led to the idea of prison reform? (The Enlightenment emphasized reason over violence, so prisons make sense.)

    - Education: What has changed about society that raises a need for improved, state-directed education? (More long-distance trading and larger businesses require mathematics and reading skills. Wider suffrage requires more education of voters. Less parental supervision as parents go off to factories has led to concern for moral education and discipline for children. State-run or state-regulated programs are becoming more common at this time, so people are more open to state-run education.) Can society afford the higher costs of improved education? (There is increased wealth in America due to higher productivity, so Americans can afford better education.)
- **Ask about analogies:** Students should ask if the reforms they propose have been tried before and if so, how they worked out. However, they should also ask if there are important differences between these other prior cases and American society in the antebellum period. Many of the proposals for education reform were based on an analogy to successful reforms in Prussia (now a part of Germany). However, Prussia was much less individualistic, much less diverse, and much more authoritarian than the United States was at the time.
- **Reflect on your goals:** Since several of the problems do not suggest reforms, students have to decide their goals for each problem in order to generate options to meet those goals. Student should be asking themselves, "So what are we trying to accomplish here? Are these goals realistic?"
- **Generate options:** Without the list of possible reforms in Handout 1, students have to generate options themselves. How creative were the options generated at the time (Handout 2), and how creative were the students' options?
- **Predict unintended consequences:** Several consequences are explained in Handout 3
- **Play out the option:** As students generate options, they should play them out to see what could go wrong. Students should be able to predict, for example, opposition by immigrants against temperance proposals and education. Opposition could also be predicted against state regulation of local education and Bible reading in class. Enforcement of prohibition laws was another difficulty that students should anticipate.

SOURCES

Ayers, Edward. *Vengeance and Justice: Crime and Punishment in the 19th-Century American South*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1984, Chapter 2.

Burns, Ken and Paul Barnes. "The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony," PBS Video, 1999.

"The Declaration of Sentiments." *Modern History Sourcebook*. Available at http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/senecafalls.html

DuBois, Ellen. *Feminism and Suffrage*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978, Chapter 1.

Evans, Sara. *Born for Liberty*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989, Chapter 5.

Feller, Daniel. *The Jacksonian Promise*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, Preface, Chapter 6.

Flexner, Eleanor. *Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975, Chapters 4, 5.

Freedman, Estelle. *Their Sisters' Keeper: Women's Prison Reform in America*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1981, Chapters 1, 2.

Ginsberg, Lori. *Women and the Work of Benevolence*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990, Introduction, Chapter 1.

Henretta, James, et al. *America's History*. New York: Bedford, 2000, Vol. 1, pp. 390–396.

Howe, Daniel Walker. *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815–1848.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, Chapters 12–15.

Kaestle, Carl. *Pillars of the Republic*. New York: Hill & Wang, 1983, Chapters 4, 5.

Kohl, Lawrence. *The Politics of Individualism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 74.

Mintz, Steven. *Moralists and Modernizers*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995.

Tyack, David. *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974, Part II.

Tyrrell, Ian. *Sobering Up: From Temperance to Prohibition in Antebellum America, 1800–1860.* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979.

LESSON 2: ANTEBELLUM REFORMS

Vocabulary

- Antebellum—Refers to the decades before the Civil War in the United States
- Separate spheres—Men were involved in the business world, while women were restricted to the home
- Seneca Falls Convention—Women's rights advocates met in 1848 to declare their grievances
- Declaration of Sentiments—Declaration of women's grievances and demands for change adopted at Seneca Falls
- Literacy—The ability to read and write
- Apprenticeships—When a beginner (apprentice) trains and works with a master craftsman
- Suffrage—The right to vote
- Temperance—Reducing the consumption of alcohol
- Prohibition—Eliminating the sale of alcohol
- Public Schools—Government-run education paid for by taxes

LESSON 2: ANTEBELLUM REFORMS

Student Handout 1: Problem

ANTEBELLUM AMERICA

Antebellum reforms in this lesson

It is the antebellum period (the period before the Civil War, in this case, about 1820 to 1850) and there are a great many social and economic changes taking place in America. Trade and industry are expanding rapidly, which is bringing prosperity to many Americans. It is also causing Americans to be more and more influenced by general economic forces such as supply, demand, shippers, and accountants, rather than local personal relationships. One religious belief held by many Americans at this time is the ideal of making society better. Religious and non-religious people have proposed a number of reforms for American society. Read each of the problems below and decide what, if anything, to do about them. You are a reform-minded citizen in each case.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Women face many forms of discrimination in antebellum America. Married women cannot own property (though single women can). In fact, they are considered the property of their husbands. Married women can't hold jobs unless their husbands approve, and their wages are their husband's legal property. They cannot hold insurance in their own names. If a married couple divorces or separates, the children are legally under the husband, so the husband generally gets custody. If the husband dies, the household becomes the property of the eldest son, not the wife. The son is obligated to allow his mother to live on the property, but it is owned by the son. A wife is expected to obey her husband, who is the head of the household. Some religious leaders say that women are helpmates, and that women have a special place to support leaders, but women should not be leaders in the church or the family. Men and women are believed to have "separate spheres." Men work in the world of business and conflict, while women provide a place of refuge from conflict for men and children at home.

Girls can go to school, but their courses are designed to prepare them for household duties, not professional careers. Women cannot go to college and are excluded from professional occupations such as medicine or law. Women cannot vote or hold office in government.

Decision 1—Women's rights: What rights will you demand in your effort to overcome some or all of this discrimination against women?

ALCOHOL

Americans drink large quantities of alcohol. The average adult consumes more than seven gallons of alcohol a year (by contrast, in 1995, people consumed an average of 2.8 gallons). Many people drink a whiskey before breakfast, and have liquor at 11:00am, 4:00pm, and again in the evening (a nightcap). This high level of alcohol consumption leads to problems, such as spousal and child abuse and neglect, poor working habits, and crime.

Decision 2—Alcohol: What will you do about alcohol consumption, if anything? Be clear about your strategies.

CRIME

In the 1840s, crime is on the rise and has been increasing for the past 20 years. The punishments for crime include hanging (for major crimes), public whippings, branding, confinement to stocks, fines, and banishment from the community. There are a few jails for holding people awaiting trial and for locking up debtors (people who had failed to pay their debts), but none for punishing criminals. Conditions in these jails are very poor. Men and women of all ages are confined together, often in large groups. Basically, criminals are punished physically, not by having their freedom taken away but by being locked up in jail.

Decision 3—Crime: What will you do, if anything, to reform punishments for criminals?

EDUCATION

The literacy rate in the United States is the highest in the world, and formal schooling (going to school buildings with paid teachers) is widespread. Nevertheless, the major form of education for children is apprenticeships (the apprentice trains with a master craftsman). Many children learn to read and write in "dame schools," where a woman takes a number of children into her home for instruction. Many other children attend one-room schoolhouses with children of different ages.

Reformers are trying to improve the education for American children. They feel more children should attend school (only about 40–50% of students attend school) and should attend more regularly (many children attend school only a few months per year). They want to improve the quality of teaching and the curriculum. They claim better education will improve American society. One reformer, T. Harris, says, "The modern industrial community cannot exist without free popular education carried out in a system of schools…" Americans see that organized, regular services have started in other areas of life, such as police, an army, and public health. The reformer Horace Mann has argued that systematic schools in Prussia (now a part of Germany), including graded classes, separate rooms for each class, and test requirements to move to the next grade, have been very successful.

Decision 4—Funding for schools: List various ways that schools could be funded (who will pay the expenses of schools?). Which is the best choice from your list?

Decision 5—Curriculum and instruction: The curriculum (what is taught), method of instruction (the way topics are taught), and the quality of teachers are left to the local schools, so there is no uniformity. Make a list of five or more ways to improve the curriculum and instruction in schools. Which of those five would you actually put into action and why?

LESSON 2: ANTEBELLUM REFORMS

Student Handout 2: Options

WHAT WILL YOU DO ABOUT DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN?

Decision 1—Women's rights:
Possible options (you can choose as many as you would like):

A. Call for an end to marriage, to be replaced by something else (perhaps called domestic partnership or civil union) that puts women as equals before the law
B. Keep marriage, but strengthen women's property rights within marriage. Women should get to keep their own property during the marriage and upon the deaths of their husbands. Women should be able to get insurance and conduct business on their own.
C. Take out the word "obey" in marriage vows
D. Change the laws so women would be able to get custody of children in the case of divorce
E. Allow married women to sue in court and testify in trials (single women already could)
F. Allow women to serve in the military
G. Give women the opportunity to become pastors and other religious leaders. Quote the Bible to show that women should be equal in the church.
H. Eliminate prostitution. Men caught hiring a prostitute (not the prostitute herself) should be punished. Give prostitutes financial help so they can change their lives.
I. Give women the right to vote
J. Let women hold political office
K. Allow women to go to college
L. Give women the opportunity to become doctors, lawyers, or other professionals
M. Pay women the same rate as men for comparable work. For example, a woman in a job that is similar to a man's job (having the same educational requirements and the same responsibilities) should get the same pay.
N. Ensure African American women have all the above rights
O. Free all slaves; half of them are women

WHAT WILL YOU DO ABOUT HIGH ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION?

Decision 2—Alcohol:
Possible options (you can choose as many as you would like):

A. Try to reduce drinking to a moderate level. It is alcohol *abuse* that causes problems, not alcohol use. There is no harm in drinking alcohol in moderation.
B. Focus on stopping the moderate drinkers. They are the ones who make drinking alcohol acceptable. Get them to recognize the errors of their ways and they'll take a pledge to stop drinking completely (called "teetotaling"). As drinking becomes less acceptable, some problem drinkers will also stop drinking. It's true that most drunkards will not stop drinking or will backslide into drinking again, but they will die off eventually, moving society closer toward a teetotaling nation.

C. Focus on those who drink the most by having reformed drinkers give speeches about how bad their lives were before they reformed. Also, provide substitute entertainment for drinking, such as no-alcohol fairs, reading rooms, and picnics.
D. Concentrate on state laws prohibiting drinking throughout the whole state. That's the only way to enforce the law. When there are laws against selling alcohol in towns or cities, people just start buying it in neighboring towns. But with alcohol illegal throughout entire states, drinking rates will really drop.
E. Focus on the women who are victims of alcohol-induced abuse (almost all abuse is by males). If we can't stop people from drinking, we can at least help the victims of drinking.
F. Send pamphlets and speakers around the country warning about the effects of drinking alcohol

WHAT WILL YOU DO ABOUT CRIME?

Decision 3—Crime:
Possible options (you can choose as many as you would like):

A. Set up penitentiaries. Loss of freedom is the punishment many criminals fear most, so prisons would deter crime. These prisons would isolate criminals from the rest of society, and they could think about their crimes and how to reform. They would be alone at night (to reflect on their actions), except when the Bible is read to them. Prisoners would be given work to do during the day and taught skills and self-discipline in order to lead better lives when they get out of prison.
B. Set up professional police forces, which would be organized like armies, have promotions based on merit, and have academies for training cadets
C. Try to reduce or eliminate alcohol consumption, which is a big cause of crime
D. Pass bankruptcy laws to allow those who can't pay their debts to pay part of what they owe, rather than go to prison. Keeping debtors in prison is illogical, since it prevents the debtor from making money to pay off the debt.

WHAT WILL YOU DO ABOUT EDUCATION?

Decision 4—Funding for schools: One area that reformers emphasize is funding for schools. They want every child to be able to attend school for free at the expense of the taxpayers in the community. Which of the following would you support? (Choose one.)

A. Free public (non-religious) education up to the eighth grade, paid for by the taxpayers in each town or city or from state taxes. There would be state boards of education, which would set consistent systems for education, including a lengthened school year, required attendance for children, higher teacher wages, and professional standards for teachers.
B. Free public (non-religious) education up to eighth grade, but paid for only by parents of school-age children, not by the property owners of the whole community (why should people without children have to pay?).
C. Don't alter the current methods of educating children. It works well enough now; any new system would likely be worse.
D. Free public education up to eighth grade, paid for by property owners, but the money would go to religious and non-religious schools alike.

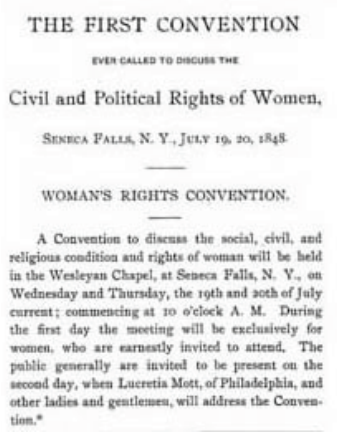
Decision 5—Curriculum and instruction: At this point, curriculum (what is taught), methods of instruction (how it is taught), and the quality of teachers are left up to the local schools, so there is no uniformity. Which of the following would you support in terms of the curriculum and instruction? You may pick as many as you like:

A. Leave the curriculum up to local schools. It is better to have the local community determine what is taught.
B. Set up state boards of education to establish common standards of what is taught in local schools. While local schools would have control of much of what they teach, all schools would have to teach, for example, multiplication and U.S. history.
C. Set up a grading system. Students would have to show they could do the work in one grade before they pass to the next grade; no more one-room schoolhouses where younger and older children are lumped together. The grading system could also be based partly on competitions, such as spelling bees and comparisons between students' grades.
D. Emphasize moral education, where students learn self-discipline and hard work. Stories read to them should have morals—for example the importance of being honest, thrifty, and prompt (on time). Self-control, self-sacrifice, and restraint are important values to be taught.
E. Students should learn to be proud of their country and admire the accomplishments of the republic. Students must be taught to respect the laws and government.
F. Students should be taught that the American democratic system is the best government in the world, that it is divinely guided, and that, despite its mistakes, it is getting better over time. America is the guiding country in the progress of civilization.
G. All students should be taught the same language to overcome regional differences in language and provide national unity. Using Webster's dictionary, students will learn common words and spelling. Immigrants will learn the common language also.
H. Students will have daily Bible readings. This country was founded on Christian principles, so children should learn those principles.
I. Students should be confronted with controversial issues or complex problems and taught how to think. In other words, the focus should be more on how to think, not what to think.
J. The curriculum should focus on practical skills for the working world of factories, trading (banking, finance, business), or farming
K. Stick to the basics of the "three Rs"—reading, (w)riting, and (a)rithmetic
L. Set up schools of education to train teachers in professional standards of instruction, along with professional conferences for sharing new teaching ideas
M. Hire more women as teachers (in the early 1800s most teachers were men). This practice will save money because women can be paid less than men. Moreover, women are ideally suited to be teachers, since they are already involved in moral teaching in their roles as wives and mothers at home. Schools will still need male overseers as principals in order to maintain discipline in schools, however.

LESSON 2: ANTEBELLUM REFORMS

Student Handout 3: Outcomes

Decision 1—WHAT WILL YOU DO ABOUT DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN?



THE FIRST CONVENTION

EVER CALLED TO DISCUSS THE

Civil and Political Rights of Women,

SENECA FALLS, N. Y., JULY 19, 20, 1848.

WOMAN'S RIGHTS CONVENTION.

A Convention to discuss the social, civil, and religious condition and rights of woman will be held in the Wesleyan Chapel, at Seneca Falls, N. Y., on Wednesday and Thursday, the 19th and 20th of July current; commencing at 10 o'clock A. M. During the first day the meeting will be exclusively for women, who are earnestly invited to attend. The public generally are invited to be present on the second day, when Lucretia Mott, of Philadelphia, and other ladies and gentlemen, will address the Convention.*

A newspaper ad for the Seneca Falls Convention

Options B, D, E, G, I, J, K, and L were explicitly stated in the Declaration of Sentiments adopted at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848. In this document, women insisted on rights to: property within marriage (Option B), custody (Option D), sue and testify in court (Option E), be leaders in the church (Option G), vote (Option I), hold office (Option J), attend college (Option K), and enter professions (Option L).

Outside of the Seneca Falls Convention, some women demanded an end to the word "obey" in marriage vows (Option C). Women also worked to end prostitution, or at least rescue women from it (Option H). The women's rights movement was closely aligned with the abolitionist movement, so white women were interested in freeing slaves. However, abolition was kept separate from women's rights most of the time. The split between the two issues became quite dramatic after the Civil War with the adoption of the 14th Amendment.

Women did not demand an end to marriage (Option A), the right to join the army or navy (Option F), or comparable pay for similar work (Option M). The latter two proposals were adopted in the late 20th century.

Women correctly identified one underlying problem as lack of political power. Without the right to vote, most of the other problems couldn't be corrected, since they required the passing of new laws. Consequently, women's rights advocates focused on getting the right to vote for women (Option I). They figured if women could vote, they could gradually attain equal rights on all these other issues. This was the most controversial demand in the Declaration of Sentiments. Unfortunately, the campaign for female suffrage was not successful until 1920.

Decision 2—WHAT WILL YOU DO ABOUT HIGH ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION?

The effort to reduce or prohibit alcohol consumption was called "temperance." The temperance movement was supported by factory owners, the clergy (religious leaders), farmers who sold their crops in commercial markets (as opposed to growing crops just for their own use), and many workers. It was led by men, but women were involved in significant numbers. As more women became involved, temperance became more of an issue of gender. Reformers focused more on male drinkers and on protecting female victims of abuse by drunken males (Option E).

At first, the temperance reformers tried to reduce drinking (Option A). They stressed that if people were going to drink alcohol, they should drink in moderation. However, the movement changed in the 1820s to complete abstinence after the religious revival called the "Second Great Awakening." Evangelical leaders believed society could improve itself spiritually and morally—and could be perfected. The emphasis was on individuals taking personal responsibility for their own actions. Reformers felt that drinking alcohol, even in moderate amounts, removed self-control and therefore led to immoral behavior. Moderate drinking also made drinking alcohol more acceptable, leading to alcohol *abuse*. Drunkards could not be expected to stop drinking with alcohol all around them. These religious reformers criticized people in their own churches who drank alcohol. The crusade against moderate drinking (Option B) led to opposition within churches, splitting religious communities.

"The Drunkard's Progress," a pro-temperance cartoon from the 1840s

The religious reformers were supported by some leaders in the medical profession, who publicized the negative medical effects of alcohol consumption. Factory owners were overwhelmingly in favor of temperance. Modern factories required self-disciplined workers, not workers who were tipsy or hung over. Jesse Goodrich, a temperance reformer, said that drinking was standing in the way of the triumph of "Capital—Enterprise—Industry—Morals—and Religion." The temperance movement used songs, books, speakers, and pamphlets to spread the word (Option F). One temperance novel, *Ten Nights in a Bar-Room,* sold 400,000 copies. By the 1830s, there were a million members of the temperance movement who pledged total abstinence. Temperance reformers also used reformed drinkers to show how bad their lives had become while drinking (Option C).

In the 1850s, temperance reformers turned to pressuring states to pass laws preventing the manufacture or sale of distilled alcohol (Option D). Prohibition laws were passed in 13 states, but a backlash reduced prohibition to five states by 1865. Courts ruled that the search-and-seizure clauses of prohibition laws violated property rights, constituting "unreasonable searches and seizures." The public also turned against the laws when their drinks were taken away.

Temperance had some success up to 1840, when average alcohol consumption per person was reduced to less than three gallons per year, down from seven in previous years. Four

thousand distilleries were forced out of business. However, the temperance ideal faded in the mid-1850s. Alcohol consumption rose back to its pre-temperance level. The temperance movement revived in the 1870s with the start of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. It continued to expand until 1920, when national prohibition was passed.

Decision 3—WHAT WILL YOU DO ABOUT CRIME?

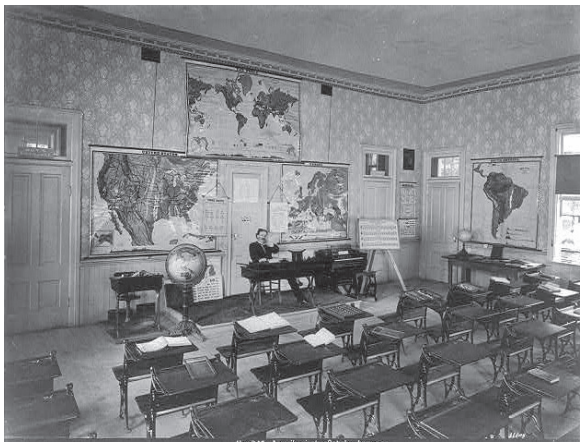
Reformers started prisons (Option A), doing so in order to accomplish several goals: First, prisons separated hardened criminals from society. Second, they offered the possibility of rehabilitating criminals. Some reformers were motivated by religious concerns; they wanted to convert prisoners into evangelicals, especially after the Second Great Awakening, which stressed individual and social salvation. Women prisoners were thought to be especially open to reform, since these "fallen women" were not in their natural state of moral purity. Third, juries might convict more often if they had an alternative to capital or physical punishment. Fourth, because prisons used forced labor, prisoners would learn self-discipline and the value of hard work.

Unfortunately, as prisons got larger, it was harder to maintain control over the inmates, and harsh punishments were again used. As states cut back on spending for prisons due to budget constraints, conditions got worse. Overcrowding prevented the isolation of prisoners and reduced the amount of supervision of each inmate. The ideal of reforming prisoners began to fade or disappeared entirely. Poor diets, harsh punishments, and overwork contributed to an annual death rate among prisoners of 5.8% in 1850. Prisons were more often used simply to hold inmates than to rehabilitate them. Female prisoners were not isolated or subject to work discipline. Rather, women were put into overcrowded rooms and neglected. They were also subject to harsh treatment and even sexual abuse.

In addition to prisons, cities also started professional police forces to reduce crime (Option B). Furthermore, reformers passed bankruptcy laws (Option D), which allowed people to pay back a portion of their debts rather than go to prison.

WHAT WILL YOU DO ABOUT EDUCATION?

Decision 4—Funding for schools:
The reformers chose Option A: public schools, called "common schools," paid for by the property owners of local towns through taxes, with a longer school year and professional standards for teachers. Methods of improving the quality of instruction included using blackboards and outline maps. Some states bore more of the tax burden at the state level rather than letting the local property-tax payers bear the brunt of it, and some states continued



A 19th-century schoolroom

to have more control of curricula at the local level. Nevertheless, with the support of a large majority of Americans (including most working-class men), tax-supported public education and state boards of education very slowly became the standard throughout the country for the next 150 years. Both political parties supported common schools, a reflection of public support.

However, resistance to state rules did come from supporters of local control. For example, citizens in Beverly, Massachusetts, voted to abolish their high school in an effort to keep local, neighborhood control over money. States voted on several occasions to abolish the state boards of education. Parents who felt they needed their children to work to supplement the family's income opposed compulsory attendance laws. Opposition also came from those who wanted parents to pay more than non-parents for the services their children were getting in school (a combination of Options A and B).

Some Catholic leaders, especially in New York City, argued for public funding for religious schools (Option D), but these efforts failed.

Decision 5—Curriculum and instruction:
The country adopted Options B, C, D, E, F, G, H, J, K, L, and M for curriculum and instruction. People did not adopt Options A and I. Some groups resisted these changes, but they were unable to prevent them because of overwhelming support.
Option B: Most states in the North and Midwest set up state boards of education, but resistance proved effective in preventing enforcement of state requirements, especially in rural areas. Curriculum and instruction did become more uniform within states, but very slowly, as states moved away from local control of curricula (Option A).

- Option C: Although there were still many one-room schoolhouses up to and after the Civil War, the grade system of schools gradually spread. The change to a graded system had important effects on children. Instead of being around older and younger children, they were now with children their own age and often in competitive situations, based on test scores and other graded assignments.
- Option D: The curriculum in these antebellum public schools focused on moral training, not discussion of controversial topics. Students were read stories with a moral in order to foster moral and ethical development.
- Options E, F, and G: Students were taught to be proud of their country and of the superiority of the American democratic system. The emphasis was on national unity, so a common language was also stressed. The idea of fostering independent thinking (Option I) was not popular.
- Option H: Protestant churches pushed for Bible readings in school. This became a significant issue to Catholics, who wanted the Catholic version of the Bible read. In one extreme case in Philadelphia, a riot broke out over the request to allow the Catholic Bible in schools. The Bible issue, along with the emphasis on Americanizing immigrants (Options E, F, and G), was a factor spurring Catholic immigrants to establish more Catholic schools to preserve their values and ethnic identities. Each ethnic group tried to establish a school based around its culture (for example, Italian or Irish).

- Options J and K: The curriculum stuck to the basics, especially the three Rs, although moral education (Options D, E, and F) was more dominant than efforts to prepare children for work.
- Option L: Schools of education, called normal schools, were set up to train teachers, but many teachers around the country remained untrained.
- Option M: Reformers emphasized hiring women as teachers in order to save money on school budgets. Before the reform movement in education, almost all teachers were men; after the reforms most teachers were women. But principals and other leaders were still men, so clearly discrimination against women remained.

LESSON 2: ANTEBELLUM REFORMS

Student Handout 4: Primary Source

The Declaration of Sentiments

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, but one to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to such a course.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of the women under this government, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to demand the equal station to which they are entitled. The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise.

He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice.

He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men—both natives and foreigners.

Having deprived her of this first right of a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on all sides.

He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead.

He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns.

He has made her, morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes with

impunity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband. In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming, to all intents and purposes, her master—the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty, and to administer chastisement.

He has so framed the laws of divorce, as to what shall be the proper causes, and in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of the children shall be given, as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of women—the law, in all cases, going upon a false supposition of the supremacy of man, and giving all power into his hands.

After depriving her of all rights as a married woman, if single, and the owner of property, he has taxed her to support a government which recognizes her only when her property can be made profitable to it.

He has monopolized nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is permitted to follow, she receives but a scanty remuneration. He closes against her all the avenues to wealth and distinction which he considers most honorable to himself. As a teacher of theology, medicine, or law, she is not known.

He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education, all colleges being closed against her.

He allows her in church, as well as state, but a subordinate position, claiming apostolic authority for her exclusion from the ministry, and, with some exceptions, from any public participation in the affairs of the church.

He has created a false public sentiment by giving to the world a different code of morals for men and women, by which moral delinquencies which exclude women from society, are not only tolerated, but deemed of little account in man.

He has usurped the prerogative of Jehovah himself, claiming it as his right to assign for her a sphere of action, when that belongs to her conscience and to her God.

He has endeavored, in every way that he could, to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life.

Now, in view of this entire disfranchisement of one-half the people of this country, their social and religious degradation--in view of the unjust laws above mentioned, and because women do feel themselves aggrieved, oppressed, and fraudulently deprived of their most sacred rights, we insist that they have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of the United States.

From Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *A History of Woman Suffrage,* Vol. 1 (Rochester, N.Y.: Fowler and Wells, 1889), pp. 70–71.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What does patterning the phrasing of the Declaration of Sentiments after the Declaration of Independence show about the women who wrote it?
2. What are the similarities and differences between the grievances in the two declarations?
3. Should the Declaration of Sentiments be considered a great document in U.S. history? Explain.

LESSON 3: ELECTION OF 1840

Teacher Pages

OVERVIEW

The 1840 election emphasized slogans over issues, as the Whig Party perfected mass campaign techniques. As such, this election solidified the characteristics of the modern election campaign. Nevertheless, issues were very much involved in the campaign and in William Henry Harrison's victory. Despite the increased emphasis on slogans, evidence indicates that Harrison won primarily due to issues, especially the depression.

VOCABULARY

- Internal improvements—Roads and canals built with the help of the government
- Tariff—A tax on imports
- Bank of the United States—National bank to help the economy grow. The national government deposits 20% of the money in the bank.
- Martin Van Buren—Leader of the Democratic Party who was President from 1837 to 1841. He was defeated in the 1840 election.
- William Henry Harrison—Whig candidate who won the 1840 election
- Democratic Party—Party of Andrew Jackson; it opposed national government programs
- Whig Party—Party that supported national government programs
- Liberty Party—Third party that wanted to abolish slavery
- "Tippecanoe and Tyler too!"—Whigs' 1840 campaign slogan that painted William Henry Harrison as a war hero (of the Battle of Tippecanoe)
- Platform—A public list of the party's position on a range of issues; each issue statement is called a "plank"

DECISION-MAKING SKILLS EMPHASIZED

- Ask about context
- Ask about reliability of sources
- Set realistic goals

LESSON PLAN

A. IN-DEPTH LESSON (30 minutes)

Procedure**:**

Give students Handout 1 on the candidates and ask them to vote and to predict who won the actual election.

OPTION: Distribute Handout 3 at this point. Ask students to read it and answer the questions: What does the Democratic platform tell us about issues versus slogans in this election? After the discussion, tell them who the candidates were and that William Henry Harrison (Candidate B) won, as noted in Handout 2. Discuss Harrison's victory and the outcomes of his success.

Reflecting on Decision Making:

Ask students if they would have voted differently now that they know the outcome. Which decision-making skills were especially important? Which of the letters of **P-A-G-E** applied especially to this problem? (See the "Decision-Making Analysis" section below for ideas.) Ask students what they did well or poorly on in terms of the **P-A-G-E** analysis of decision making. Discuss their answers.

Putting the Actual Decisions Into Historical Context:

Ask students if they were surprised that Candidate B won. Why or why not? There answers will reveal the extent to which they see historical forces at work. You could also ask: Why was the campaign conducted the way it was? What does it show about American society and politics at the time?

Connecting to Today:

What should people consider when voting in presidential elections: character, skills, or issues? What does the 1840 election show about how to choose a candidate? How important are vice presidential candidates in modern elections? Should we scrutinize them carefully?

Troubleshooting:

Some students might wonder why inflation is ever good, even in a depression. Workers' wages go up, but the prices they pay for goods and services go up at the same time. Tell them that increasing the money supply makes more money available for loans. More borrowing means an expansion of the economy, thus helping the country recover from the depression.

B. QUICK MOTIVATOR (10–15 minutes)

Have students choose their candidate for homework. In class, ask them to vote on the candidates and predict the results. Then give them Handout 2 with the outcomes. Keep the discussion short by focusing just on whether students voted more on personal characteristics or on issues.

TEACHER NOTES FOR EXPANDING DISCUSSION

(For outcomes for students, see Handout 2)

William Henry Harrison's campaign emphasized symbols and slogans, rather than issues, in winning the White House. Recent historical interpretations show, however, that issues were just as important in this campaign as in other elections. While Harrison was evasive on many issues, voters would have had no trouble figuring out the differences between Whigs and Democrats on issues such as internal improvements, the Bank of the U.S., or executive power. Moreover, this was the first election in which a party (the Democrats) made a platform of its position on issues, setting a trend that has continued. Historian Michael Holt has demonstrated convincingly that the depression was the main reason for the Whig victory. Whig support correlated with bad economic times. The Whigs promised strong action to cure the depression, and voters supported the Whigs in response.

Some of the alcohol for Harrison rallies was supplied by E. C. Booz, which made the word "booze" much more popular. William Henry Harrison was the first candidate to actively campaign, giving speeches in revival settings.

We get the expression "OK" from the 1840 election. In 1839 the phrase "oll correct" (for "all right") was shortened to "OK," and became popular in Boston. Martin Van Buren supporters began to use the fashionable expression to identify their candidate, "Old Kinderhook." It spread rapidly beyond the campaign all over the country and eventually around the world. Today, it is one of the most commonly understood terms in the world.

DECISION-MAKING ANALYSIS:

P = Problem
- Identify any underlying problem(s)
- Consider other points of view
- What are my assumptions? Emotions?

A = Ask for information (about)
* - Historical context (history of this issue; context in the world)
* - Reliability of sources
- Historical analogies

G = Goals
* - What are my main goals? Are they realistic?
- Generate options to achieve these goals. Are they ethical?

E = Effects
- Predict unintended consequences.
- Play out the options. What could go wrong?

*Denotes topics emphasized in this lesson

- **Ask about context:** Despite all the slogans, the depression is very important in this election. Students should ask about it in regard to predicting who won the election.
- **Ask about reliability of sources:** Since Harrison was rich and Van Buren actually came from a modest background, Whig campaigners were obviously lying in portraying Harrison in a log cabin and Van Buren as being aristocratic. Did students question the reliability of the Whig sources? There was also an interesting debate on whether Harrison was actually a war hero. How reliable were the Whig sources asserting that Harrison was a hero and how reliable was the general (Andrew Jackson) who argued that he wasn't? (Both sides were partisan, so each had a reason to lie.)
- **Reflect on your goals:** Is the primary goal to get someone with strong character, good decision-making skills, or the right positions in important issues? Should voters favor someone who represents the common people? Which criteria for the presidency did students emphasize?

FURTHER RESEARCH:

The platform of the Democratic Parties is laid out at The American Presidency Project, available at http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/platforms.php.

SOURCES

"1840 Election." History Central. Available at http://www.historycentral.org/elections/1840.html (requires registration).

Boyer, Paul, et al. *The Enduring Vision*. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1995, pp. 214–5.

"Election of 1840 Party Platforms" The American Presidency Project. Available at http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/platforms.php.

Henretta, James, et al. *America's History*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000, Vol. 1, pp. 372–374.

Holt, Michael. *Political Parties and American Political Development: From the Age of Jackson to the Age of Lincoln*. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University, 1992, Chapter 3.

Howe, Daniel Walker. *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815–1848.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 570–584.

"Martin Van Buren." The White House.Org. Available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/mb8.html.

Monroe, R. D. "Campaign of 1840." *Getting the Message Out: National Campaign Materials, 1840–1860*. Available at http://dig.lib.niu.edu/message/campaignhistory-1840.html.

Peterson, Norma. *The Presidencies of William Henry Harrison and John Tyler*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1989, Chapter 2.

Silbey, Joel. "Martin Van Buren." American President.org. Available at http://www.americanpresident.org/history/martinvanburen.

Widmer, Ted. *Martin Van Buren*. New York: Times Books, 2005, pp. 130–140.

"William Henry Harrison." American President.org. Available at http://www.americanpresident.org/history/williamhharrison/biography/CampaignsElections.common.shtml.

Wilson, Major. *The Presidency of Martin Van Buren*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1984, Chapter 10.

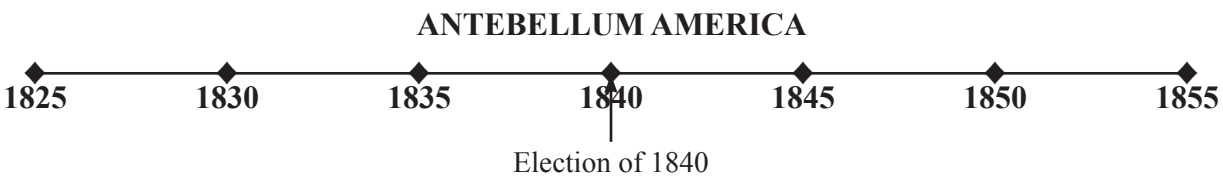
LESSON 3: ELECTION OF 1840

Vocabulary

- Internal improvements—Roads and canals built with the help of the government
- Tariff—A tax on imports
- Bank of the United States—National bank to help the economy grow. The national government deposits 20% of the money in the bank.
- Martin Van Buren—Leader of the Democratic Party who was President from 1837 to 1841. He was defeated in the 1840 election.
- William Henry Harrison—Whig candidate who won the 1840 election
- Democratic Party—Party of Andrew Jackson; it opposed national government programs
- Whig Party—Party that supported national government programs
- Liberty Party—Third party that wanted to abolish slavery
- "Tippecanoe and Tyler too!"—Whigs' 1840 campaign slogan that painted William Henry Harrison as a war hero (of the Battle of Tippecanoe)
- Platform—A public list of the party's position on a range of issues; each issue statement is called a "plank"

LESSON 3: ELECTION OF 1840

Student Handout 1



You are a voter in the Presidential Election of 1840. Choose the candidate who will be best for the country.

Who do you predict will win the election?

Candidate A

Positions on issues:

This candidate's views on the issues are from his party's platform and from his speeches:

1. Internal improvements: He opposes the national government paying for or building these improvements (roads, bridges)
2. National bank: He is opposed to a national bank that is controlled by the national government
3. State vs. national government: He doesn't want the national government to interfere with the states. He feels that states should be able to control what happens within their borders.
4. Privilege: He argues that if the country adopts the positions of the other party (internal improvements by the national government, a national bank, national interference in state matters) it would increase national (as opposed to state) power to a great extent. It would also provide special privileges to people with connections to the national government. For example, owners of businesses with connections to Congress might be given contracts to work on internal improvements. Candidate A stands for ordinary people against special privileges.
5. Money: He wants a stable money supply to avoid inflation, a policy that will maintain a safe environment for investments and avoid eroding workers' wages (through higher prices)
6. Immigration: He thinks immigrants should be able to become citizens without restrictions
7. Taxes: He wants low tariffs

Personal characteristics:

He dresses very well and was a lawyer in New York. He effectively ran a political organization in New York. He was elected to the Senate, was secretary of state, and most recently was president. He is now running for reelection. Three months after he became president, the country went into a depression and is still in it now, four years later.

His campaign has produced information from a former general to show that Candidate B was actually not a war hero. Supporters of Candidate A charge that Candidate B has changed his views on many issues—he's a "flip-flopper." They also argue that the slogans and rallies for Candidate B are merely emotional and cover up his lack of specifics on issues.

Candidate A is 58 years old and is 5'7" tall. He is married, with four children still alive at this time (one died). He is a Protestant. Candidate A's supporters claim Candidate B is so old (67) that he is more suited to sitting in a rocking chair in a log cabin, sipping cider, than to being president.

Candidate B

Positions on issues:
This candidate has campaigned more than any candidate thus far in American history, giving numerous speeches. However, most of his speeches say that he will support Congress's wishes. He thinks the president is too powerful, so he wants to cut back on the president taking strong stands. These views on specific issues are mostly from his party's platform. For each issue, Candidate B will respect Congress's decisions, even if Congress decides against that position.
Internal improvements: His party supports the idea of the national government helping to pay for local roads, canals and bridges (called internal improvements)

1. National bank—His party supports a national bank, controlled by the national government. He is opposed to a national bank, in opposition to his party, but he'll support it if Congress is for it.
2. State vs. national government: His party campaigned that the national government should take action to improve the economy, partly through expanding the money supply and partly through internal improvements. Candidate B supports both of these positions.
3. Taxes—His party supports protective tariffs to help American businesses grow and compete with foreign businesses.
4. His party believes, like himself, that the president has too much power, and that the president needs to respect the laws passed by Congress.

Personal characteristics:
He was an army commander and later the governor of Indiana Territory. Many Americans see him as a war hero who defeated Native Americans. Candidate B's campaign says his opponent (Candidate A) is a corrupt politician who makes inside deals. The campaign emphasizes that his opponent is well-dressed, and drinks fine wines and eats exotic foods. Candidate A is charged with turning the White House into a palace at taxpayer expense, installing British carpets and a French bed, among other changes. Candidate B claims that Candidate A has repeatedly changed his views (waffled) on issues.

Candidate B claims that he is a rugged frontiersman who drinks hard cider, just like ordinary Americans. His campaign has been very active. His supporters would come to town with a torchlight parade in the evening and, during the night, they would set up a

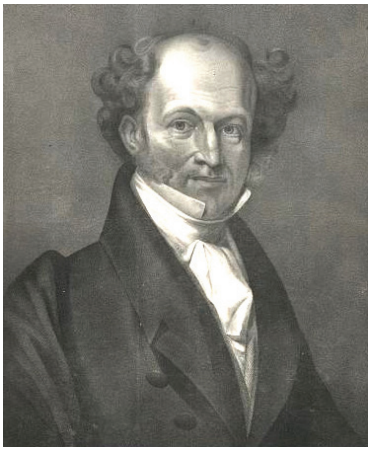
tent on the outskirts of town, similar to the tent revivals of the Second Great Awakening. In the morning, they would call people to come to the tent to hear speeches critical of Candidate A for not taking actions to end the Depression of 1837. In addition, people would hear music, songs, and slogans highlighting good points about Candidate B. At many rallies, people would be given hard cider or other alcoholic beverages. His campaign has also put up drawings of Candidate B in a log cabin, drinking cider.

He is from Ohio, and is a former member of the House of Representatives and the Senate. He is 67 years old, married, and has three children still alive (six have died). He is a Protestant.

LESSON 3: ELECTION OF 1840

Student Handout 2: Outcomes

William Henry Harrison



Martin van Buren

Candidate B, the Whig William Henry Harrison, defeated Candidate A, the Democrat Martin Van Buren, by 53% to 47% (234 electoral votes to 60) in the 1840 election. Harrison generally avoided taking a clear stand on issues, concentrating on creating an image of an ordinary, rugged American, while painting Van Buren as an aristocrat who was out of touch with ordinary Americans. Harrison sponsored big political rallies, which included hard cider for citizens (which is why it was referred to as a "hard cider" campaign), and ran on a slogan of "Tippecanoe and Tyler too!" Van Buren lost mainly because of the depression and his ineffectiveness in dealing with it. But there is no doubt that image was also a component of the election outcome. Interestingly, Van Buren grew up in a poor family, while Harrison was from a wealthy Virginia family. The "log cabin" candidate was actually well-educated in classical studies and medicine and loved expensive wine, rather than cheap cider.

The Whig Party used mass-campaign techniques, including party organization and use of slogans and rallies, which the Democrats had used in previous campaigns. Hickory poles for Andrew Jackson (a symbol of Jackson's strength) became log cabins for William Henry Harrison. The Whigs were very successful in their techniques. Not only did they win the election, but also voter turnout reached an astonishing 80%, one of the highest in U.S. history. The Whig Party was supported most strongly by wealthy businessmen and plantation owners. And yet in this election, they managed to convince voters through slogans and symbols that they represented the common people, while Martin Van Buren and the Democrats, whose support normally came from white workers and immigrants, represented the rich. The mass-campaign techniques have influenced all American elections since.

Notice that the slavery issue was not stressed by either party, although the Democratic position against national interference in states was obviously to protect slavery against interference by the national government. When the Whigs did not take a stand against

slavery, some abolitionists, who favored the Whigs, formed the Liberty Party, which received only about 7000 votes (0.3%).

President Harrison died only one month after taking office, so the American people got a lot more of "Tyler too" than they did of the hero of Tippecanoe. Tyler turned out to be a total disaster for the Whig Party, since he opposed many of the issues supported by his own party. People did not give the vice presidency much thought, but in this election they should have.

LESSON 3: ELECTION OF 1840

Student Handout 3: Primary Source

Democratic Party Platform of 1840, May 6, 1840 (excerpt)

1. Resolved, That the federal government is one of limited powers, derived solely from the Constitution, and the grants of power shown therein, ought to be strictly construed by all the departments and agents of the government, and that it is inexpedient and dangerous to exercise doubtful constitutional powers.
2. Resolved, That the Constitution does not confer upon the general government the power to commence and carry on, a general system of internal improvements.

3. Resolved, That the Constitution does not confer authority upon the federal government, directly or indirectly, to assume the debts of the several states, contracted for local internal improvements, or other state purposes; nor would such assumption be just or expedient.

4. Resolved, That justice and sound policy forbid the federal government to foster one branch of industry to the detriment of another…

5. Resolved, That it is the duty of every branch of the government, to enforce and practice the most rigid economy, in conducting our public affairs, and that no more revenue ought to be raised, than is required to defray the necessary expenses of the government.

6. Resolved, That Congress has no power to charter a national bank; that we believe such an institution one of deadly hostility to the best interests of the country, dangerous to our republican institutions and the liberties of the people, and calculated to place the business of the country within the control of a concentrated money power, and above the laws and the will of the people.

7. Resolved, That Congress has no power, under the Constitution, to interfere with or control the domestic institutions of the several states, and that such states are the sole and proper judges of everything appertaining to their own affairs, not prohibited by the Constitution; that all efforts by abolitionists or others, made to induce congress to interfere with questions of slavery, or to take incipient steps in relation thereto, are calculated to lead to the most alarming and dangerous consequences…

8. Resolved, That the separation of the moneys of the government from banking institutions, is indispensable for the safety of the funds of the government, and the rights of the people.

9. Resolved, That the liberal principles embodied by Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence, and sanctioned in the Constitution, which makes ours the land of liberty, and the asylum of the oppressed of every nation, have ever been cardinal principles in the democratic faith; and every attempt to abridge the present privilege of becoming citizens, and the owners of soil among us, ought to be resisted with the same spirit which swept the alien and sedition laws from our statute-book.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. To which groups is this platform meant to appeal? List at least four groups. For example, what sort of group would favor plank #7?
2. To which group today, liberals or conservatives, would this platform be most appealing?
3. How reliable is this source in telling us the beliefs of the Democratic Party in 1840? Explain.

LESSON 4: POVERTY AND WORKERS, 1835–1850

Teacher Pages

OVERVIEW

The issues of poverty and the problems of workers are very much related. Will students suggest underlying economic causes for poverty, or will they emphasize social causes, such as drunkenness and laziness? Since temperance is one of the reforms analyzed in a previous lesson (Lesson 2), students who have participated in that lesson may be more inclined to suggest alcohol as a cause.

VOCABULARY

- Antebellum—Refers to the decades before the Civil War in the United States
- Paupers—People who are so poor that they need help to survive
- Five Points—A very poor area of New York City
- Poorhouse/almshouse—A building or home where the poor could get free shelter and food
- Workhouse—A place where people get food and shelter in exchange for work
- Depression—A decline in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) coupled with an increase in unemployment to over 10%
- Tariff—A tax on imports
- Public works—The government hires workers in order to decrease unemployment
- Know-Nothing Party—A political party whose main issue was opposing immigration

DECISION-MAKING SKILLS EMPHASIZED

- Identify underlying problems
- Consider other points of view
- Recognize assumptions
- Ask about context
- Set realistic goals
- Generate options
- Predict unintended consequences
- Play out options

LESSON PLAN

A. IN-DEPTH LESSON (one 40-minute class period)

Procedure**:**

Distribute Handout 1, and have students form groups to brainstorm options for dealing with poverty and the problems of workers. Give time for students to ask questions. Ask each group to report its solutions to the whole class, including the solution(s) the group members favor. List the options on the board. Ask students if they set a goal before proposing options to achieve their goal. How do their proposed solutions match up with their goal? If they have not thought of goals, have students go back and set some. Then have them reconsider their options in light of their goals. Ask students what their suggested options and choices show about their understanding of what causes poverty.

OPTION: Instead of having students generate options on their own, as described above, you could give them options from which to select. Distribute Handout 2, which contains options for dealing with poverty and the problems of workers. Have students discuss and decide if they will adopt each of these proposals. Bring the class together and have students vote on these options. Which do they favor and why? Distribute Handout 3 with the actual reforms and outcomes. Discuss these outcomes. What surprised students? Which programs did they predict would be adopted? The illustration in Handout 1 is a primary source. Ask students what it shows about people's attitude toward the poor.

Reflecting on Decision Making:

Ask students what they would have done differently, if anything, now that they know the outcomes. Which decision-making skills were especially important in making decisions about poverty and workers? Which of the letters of **P-A-G-E** applied especially to this problem? (See the "Decision-Making Analysis" section below for ideas.) Ask students what they did well or poorly on in terms of the **P-A-G-E** analysis of decision-making. Discuss their answers.

Putting the Actual Decisions Into Historical Context:

Ask students whether poverty and unemployment were more a result of individual choices or historical forces. (Supporters of temperance felt individuals made bad choices, which could lead to unemployment and poverty. On the other hand, the Depressions of 1819 and 1837 clearly caused an increase in unemployment, so there were definitely historical forces at work.)

Connecting to Today:

Poverty and unemployment are still a part of American society. What do the reform efforts in the 1830s and 1840s show us, if anything, about reform in today's society? (Students should also be alert to differences in the analogies between the 1840s and today.)

Troubleshooting:

Some students may struggle with the reason why tariffs cause higher prices on competing goods (Handout 2, "What Will You Do About Workers?", Option C). You might want to role-play the example given in the problem and ask students if they would, as owners of a cloth factory in America, raise prices on cloth if there is a higher tariff and thus less competition. Most students will say yes, which will show them why prices rise with tariffs.

B. QUICK MOTIVATOR (15–20 minutes):

Distribute both Handouts 1 and 2 for homework. In class, have students pair up and discuss their decision in regard to the two problems for about two minutes. Ask students to vote on the various proposals. You could discuss the reasons for student votes, and possibly have students revote. Distribute Handout 3 and discuss these outcomes.

TEACHER NOTES FOR EXPANDING DISCUSSION

(For outcomes for students, see Handout 3)

It is interesting that a few Americans suggested changing the system to redistribute wealth before Karl Marx proposed socialism later in the 19th century.

DECISION-MAKING ANALYSIS:

P = Problem
* **- Identify any underlying problem(s)**
* - Consider other points of view
* - What are my assumptions? Emotions?

A = Ask for information (about)
* - Historical context (history of this issue; context in the world)
  - Reliability of sources
  - Historical analogies

G = Goals
* - What are my main goals? Are they realistic?
* **- Generate options to achieve these goals. Are they ethical?**

E = Effects
* **- Predict unintended consequences.**
* **- Play out the options. What could go wrong?**

*Denotes topics emphasized in this lesson

- **Identify any underlying problems:** An underlying problem for these two decisions was the changing American economy and society, which was causing some people to adjust and adapt. Rapid urbanization and immigration may have been causing increased poverty and unemployment. Students should consider that high unemployment, due to economic depressions, is an important cause of poverty. The decision regarding reducing poverty due to unemployment (pro-business policies or government public works) is different from reducing poverty due to laziness (workhouses, temperance). In addition, the workplace was also changing, from a personal relationship, where the master might take care of the needs of poor workers, to an impersonal marketplace, where no one took care of the needs of the poor. Some reformers felt the underlying problem of poverty was the whole capitalist system, in which case the proposed solution was to change the system of capitalism.
- **Consider other points of view:** Students should consider other points of view, such as those of women, men, children, immigrants, taxpayers, Catholics, Protestants, non-religious people, working class, middle class, and rich.

- **Identify assumptions, emotions:** Students should consider their own assumptions, perhaps including that poor people are lazy; women are passive and frail; drinking alcohol either does or doesn't cause other problems, such as crime or abuse of women; criminals can or cannot be rehabilitated; immigrants increase crime; imprisonment is more humane and more effective than physical punishment; public education is or isn't worth the expense; individuals can learn knowledge and morals; state-run institutions are good or bad. Student assumptions may be correct. Students should be conscious of them.
- **Ask about context:** Students could (and should) ask a number of questions about context: what has happened to poverty rates in America over the past 50 years? Has it been increasing or decreasing? How does America's poverty rate compare to the poverty rates in Europe? What historical context has led to the idea of workhouses? (Americans felt that all people could prosper if they worked for it in this land of opportunity, so they wanted able-bodied poor people to work in exchange for aid.)
- **Reflect on your goals:** Since there are no suggested reforms in Handout 1, students have to decide their goals for each problem in order to generate options to meet those goals. Student should be asking themselves, "So what are we trying to accomplish here?" and "How realistic is this goal?".
- **Generate options:** Without a list of possible reforms on Handout 1, students have to generate options themselves. After distributing Handout 2, you could ask: How creative do you think the options generated at the time were, and how creative were your own options?
- **Predict unintended consequences:** Several consequences are explained in Handout 3.
- **Play out options:** As students generate options, they should play them out to see what could go wrong. For example, the workhouses had a number of problems, as outlined in Handout 3. Students should be able to predict opposition by immigrants over restricting immigration and temperance.

SOURCES

Folsom, Franklin. *Impatient Armies of the Poor*. Niwot, CO: University Press of Colorado, 1991, Chapters 2–4.

Henretta, James, et al. *America's History*. New York: Bedford, 2000, Vol. 1, Chapter 13.

Howe, Daniel Walker. *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815–1848.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, Chapters 12–15.

Katz, Michael. *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America*. New York: Basic Books, 1986, Chapter 1.

Mintz, Steven. *Moralists and Modernizers*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995.

"Tariff of 1846." U-S-History.com. Available at http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h968.html.

Tyrrell, Ian. *Sobering Up: From Temperance to Prohibition in Antebellum America, 1800–1860.* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979, Chapter 12.

LESSON 4: POVERTY AND WORKERS, 1835–1850

Vocabulary

- Antebellum—Refers to the decades before the Civil War in the United States
- Paupers—People who are so poor that they need help to survive
- Five Points—A very poor area of New York City
- Poorhouse/almshouse—A building or home where the poor could get free shelter and food
- Workhouse—A place where people get food and shelter in exchange for work
- Depression—A decline in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) coupled with an increase in unemployment to over 10%
- Tariff—A tax on imports
- Public works—The government hires workers in order to decrease unemployment
- Know-Nothing Party—A political party whose main issue was opposing immigration

LESSON 4: POVERTY AND WORKERS, 1835–1850

Student Handout 1: Problems

ANTEBELLUM AMERICA

Antebellum reforms in this lesson

Poverty, much of it among unskilled workers, is a problem in antebellum America, especially in cities. The economy is expanding, which is bringing prosperity to many Americans, but some people are being left out. The changing economy is also causing Americans to be more and more influenced by impersonal market forces, such as supply, demand, shippers, and accountants. The religious beliefs of many Americans incorporate the ideal of making society better, including for the poorest, most disadvantaged Americans. Read the problems on poverty and workers and decide what you will do.

Problem 1—Poverty:

You are the mayor of New York City. A recent survey by the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism showed there are 13,000 paupers in New York City, which is about 11% of the total city population of 120,000. There are high poverty rates in many cities and soup kitchens have been set up by city governments and churches. Up until now, family members were responsible for supporting poor relatives. When that wasn't possible, each city or town takes care of its own poor residents. In this system, local residents bid to take care of poor members. The resident agrees to provide room and board (food) in exchange for labor by the pauper and also receives payment from the city or town. The lowest bidder (the resident who offers to take the least amount of money from the town) gets the pauper. For example, if Bob Jones makes the lowest bid (say $15 per year) on poor person Bill Smith, then he provides room and board for Mr. Smith. In exchange, Mr. Smith works for Mr. Jones, and Mr. Jones receives $15 per year from the city or town. This auction system has led to barbarity, as some sponsors abuse the poor people they "purchase" at auction. They require the poor under their care to do an unreasonable amount of work. Auctions also lead to corruption, as relatives get paid money from cities or towns to take care of family members they were going to care for anyway.

A scene from the slums in Five Points

But New York City isn't a small town, it's a big city. It has a huge slum area called Five Points. A few cities, including your city of New York, have set up almshouses, where paupers receive shelter and food. About three years ago, thousands of poor people in the city started a riot in which they broke into food businesses, dumped barrels of flour into the street and then stole the flour that was left over. There have been worker rebellions in Europe as well.

What will you do about poverty in New York City? Brainstorm options and choose the ones you favor.

Problem 2—Workers:

Workers in cities are facing tough times. Unemployment is high and wages have dropped, especially since the Depression of 1837. Some workers are having a difficult time buying the necessities of life: food, clothing, and shelter.

What will you do about workers? Brainstorm options and choose the ones you favor.

LESSON 4: POVERTY AND WORKERS, 1835–1850

Student Handout 2: Suggested Options

WHAT WILL YOU DO ABOUT POVERTY IN NEW YORK CITY?

Possible options:

A. Nothing. The system of family responsibility, selling the poor to the lowest bidder for work, and almshouses isn't perfect, but it's better than any alternative

B. Set up workhouses, where the able-bodied poor would be required to work in exchange for aid. They would be taught self-discipline and good work habits, and they would be required to stop drinking. The amount of money it takes to run these workhouses would be lower than the amount paid now for poor relief. People on poor relief get it whether they work or not. Fewer people will take aid if they have to work for it. Of course, those who aren't able to work (the elderly, the sick, and children) would still get aid from the workhouses without having to work. But by separating the able-bodied poor from the truly needy, the costs of helping the poor will be cut.

C. Give more aid to the poor: increase public funding for almshouses

D. Set up common schools. These would be public schools paid for by tax money, rather than by parents. Since everyone would have an equal chance, poor people would have the opportunity to improve the lives of their children.

WHAT WILL YOU DO ABOUT WORKERS?

Possible options:

A. Expand public works to employ people, for example by having city governments hire more workers to clean streets or maintain government buildings. This option would cost more tax money, but would decrease unemployment and therefore poverty.

B. Reduce or stop immigration

C. Reduce the tariff, which is very high at this point (an average of about 40%). A high tariff leads to higher prices that workers then have to pay. For example, let's assume cloth costs the same to make in the U.S. and abroad, but there is a 40% tariff on cloth, which means imported cloth would cost 40% more than the base price. Imported cloth is now very expensive, so fewer people will buy it, buying American cloth instead. But less competition with imported cloth means American clothmakers can raise prices, say to 30% higher than the base price. Reducing the tariff, therefore, will help workers because it will increase competition and thereby reduce prices.

D. Encourage labor unions. With unions, workers could organize to improve their own wages and conditions.
E. Prevent the use of labor-saving machinery. For example, the power loom weaves cloth much faster than hand-powered looms, but every such machine puts several weavers who work by hand, out of their jobs.
F. Try to reduce or stop the consumption of alcohol, which causes unemployment and poverty
G. Prevent any government interference with business, so businesses will prosper and hire more workers
H. Cut wages for government workers like street sweepers, and use the money saved to hire more workers. (e.g., before: eight workers at $5/day; after: ten workers at $4/day.) Some workers will have to make a sacrifice to let the government employ more people and thereby help reduce poverty.
I. Redistribute wealth according to work done, not property owned. (This proposal would give much more wealth to workers and make the distribution of wealth a lot more equal.) The entire economic system at present is set up to help owners at the expense of workers. All other reforms are avoiding the real problem—the whole system is rigged against workers and the poor.
J. Make land available in the West at low prices for workers. Such a situation will provide opportunities for unemployed workers and the poor.

LESSON 4: POVERTY AND WORKERS, 1835-1850

Student Handout 3: Outcomes

WHAT WILL YOU DO ABOUT POVERTY?

Many cities in the United States, including New York City, set up workhouses (Option B) that required the able-bodied to work in exchange for aid. In this way, taxpayers would be helping the "deserving poor" (the elderly, sick, or young children) but not giving able-bodied yet unemployed people handouts. This new system was supposed to teach the poor self-discipline, good work habits, and good morals. It was intended to cure the underlying causes of poverty by curbing alcohol abuse and correcting poor work habits. It was also supposed to save cities and towns money, since the poor would be providing labor in exchange for taxpayer help.

Workhouse on Blackwell's Island, New York City

Unfortunately, workhouses did not work out well. By the 1850s reports showed that the inmates of workhouses had poor food, clothing, and heat. At one workhouse, one out of six inmates died during a single year. Since money was limited, there were not enough professionally trained staff members (who were expensive to hire) to really help poor people learn new habits and skills. The poorly trained heads of workhouses often fell into corruption, for example, by giving jobs to relatives. The understaffed, underfunded workhouses became dumping grounds for the poor, who were all thrown together—widows, prostitutes, children, drunks, the mentally ill, and beggars. It turned out to be very difficult to separate the able-bodied from the deserving poor. More than half the inmates couldn't work, since they were children, elderly, deaf, blind, or mentally ill. According to later calculations, the costs of workhouses were higher than the previous mixed system of poverty relief. Many of the workhouses were closed after 1860, but even at their height, workhouses only dealt with about 25% of the people needing help. Most people continued to get support in their homes, often from relatives. The controversy over how to solve the problem of poverty continued in the United States throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

Many workers favored increasing aid to the poor (Option C), which was done in a few cities, but that idea was generally voted down. People did not favor paying higher taxes for increased poor relief.

Common schools (Option D) were adopted, and they clearly reduced poverty for many people over time.

WHAT WILL YOU DO ABOUT WORKERS?

Workers favored public works (Option A) and preventing machines from taking jobs from real people (Option E). Some workers wanted to distribute wealth according to work done, rather than property owned (Option I), but this idea didn't get much support before the Civil War.

Some native workers wanted to reduce or halt immigration (Option B). In fact, the Know-Nothing Party formed to stop immigration. But despite anti-immigration feelings by some, the government did not restrict immigration—no far-reaching restrictions were passed into law during this period. Since there was a shortage of workers in the U.S., immigrants were filling a necessary role for the country, and were contributing to greater economic growth.

If you tried to pass legislation restricting immigration, you would have wound up weakening your political party (and probably the economy as well). Immigrants would have remembered your anti-immigrant stand and started voting against you. They were well organized, especially in cities.

Reformers focused on morality, especially workhouses for the poor and temperance (Option F) for the poor and workers. According to reformers, drinking alcohol was an important cause of poverty and unemployment. Their attempts to moderate drinking—and later, to prohibit it—did reduce drinking somewhat, but lasted only a few years, after which drinking rose to a higher level per person than before the temperance movement began.

The idea of cutting wages in exchange for more jobs (Option H) was proposed, but it didn't pass. Options D and G, encouraging unions and preventing interference in businesses, respectively, were not proposed at this time.

The government did make land available in the West at low prices for workers (Option J). In 1841, Congress passed the Preemption Act, which allowed people to claim and buy 160 acres of federal government land for the low price of $1.25 per acre, if they built a house on it and improved the land.

The government did lower tariff rates with the Walker Tariff in 1846 (Option C). Workers benefited greatly, since the prices for many goods dropped significantly. Western farmers sold more crops in Europe as a result of the lower rates (more European ships were coming to the U.S. and thus had incentive to take American crops and other products back with them). Also, the U.S. government took in MORE tax money from the tariff than it had under the higher rates. The government took in so much revenue from the tariff that it didn't have to raise taxes to fight the Mexican War. In addition, the U.S. experienced rapid economic growth. It isn't clear how much of the growth was due to the lower tariff, but it appears that the reduction in the tariff was one of the causes.

LESSON 5: ABOLITIONISM

Teacher Pages

OVERVIEW

The stain of slavery was one of America's greatest moral dilemmas. In this lesson, students assume the position of abolitionists in the antebellum period. Their goal is to end slavery, but they have to decide how to frame their overall public position on slavery, the position of African Americans in American society after slavery ends, and the specific strategies to end it. What methods will be most effective?

VOCABULARY

- Abolition—To do away with something (in this case, slavery)
- Gradual emancipation—Slaves would be freed over a period of years or decades
- American Colonization Society—A group that wanted to send freed slaves to Africa
- *Walker's Appeal*—Pamphlet in which the African American author David Walker argues that slavery is so horrible that slaves should revolt and overthrow their masters
- William Lloyd Garrison—Leading abolitionist who published *The Liberator*
- Prudence Crandall—An abolitionist who started a school for African American girls
- Elijah Lovejoy—Owner of an antislavery newspaper who was killed by a proslavery mob
- Gag rule—Under it, Congress did not read or discuss petitions regarding slavery
- Angelina and Sarah Grimke—Abolitionist sisters who published newspaper notices showing the horrors of slavery
- John Brown—Led a slave rebellion in 1859
- *Uncle Tom's Cabin*—Abolitionist novel by Harriet Beecher Stowe

DECISION-MAKING SKILLS EMPHASIZED

- Identify underlying problems
- Consider other points of view
- Ask about context
- Ask about analogies
- Set realistic goals
- Predict unintended consequences
- Play out options

LESSON PLAN

A. IN-DEPTH LESSON (one 40-minute class period)

Procedure**:**

Distribute Handout 1 and have students pair up and decide what they will do for each of the three problems. Allow time for students to ask questions. After students have made some tentative decisions, discuss their choices and the reasons for them. At this point, give students Handout 2, with arguments for and against various options. Then have students go back to their pairs and discuss their decisions in light of these new arguments. Bring the class back together and discuss their decisions. Distribute Handout 3 with the actual abolitionist choices, outcomes, and a detailed timeline of events for context. Discuss these outcomes. What surprised students?

Reflecting on Decision Making:

Ask students what they would have done differently, if anything, now that they know the outcomes. Which decision-making skills were especially important in making decisions about abolition? Which of the letters of **P-A-G-E** applied especially to this problem? (See the "Decision-Making Analysis" section below for ideas.) Ask students what they did well or poorly on in terms of the **P-A-G-E** analysis of decision-making. Discuss their answers.

Putting the Actual Decisions Into Historical Context:

Ask students whether abolition was more the work of key individuals or historical forces. (A case could be made that committed leaders like William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, Angelina Grimke, and Wendell Phillips were crucial to increasing abolitionist agitation. On the other hand, historical forces, such as the Second Great Awakening, Enlightenment thinking, and changes in communication were also important.)

Connecting to Today:

Choose a controversial issue today and decide whether compromise would be better or whether a principled but unpopular stand is the right action to take.

Troubleshooting:

You might want to review with students the ways in which the Constitution protected the institution of slavery. That way, students won't be caught off guard when they read abolitionist arguments that criticize the Constitution.

B. QUICK MOTIVATOR (10–20 minutes)

Assign both Handouts 1 and 2 for homework. In class, have students pair up and discuss their decisions on the three problems for about five minutes. Ask students to vote on the various proposals. You could discuss the reasons for student votes, and possibly have students revote. Distribute Handout 3 and discuss these outcomes.

TEACHER NOTES FOR EXPANDING DISCUSSION

(For outcomes for students, see Handout 3)

Arguments to end slavery began during the colonial period and continued through the Revolution, as the Constitution was being written, and throughout the New Republic period. This lesson focuses on the 1830s and 1840s as an intense period of agitation, which provides a context for the causes of the Civil War problems in later lessons.

The author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Harriett Beecher Stowe, was not herself an abolitionist, according to historian Steven Mintz (see sources). The novel nevertheless influenced abolitionism and was a strategy option, so it was included in the lesson.

DECISION-MAKING ANALYSIS:

P = Problem
* **- Identify any underlying problem(s)**
* - Consider other points of view
  - What are my assumptions? Emotions?

A = Ask for information (about)
* - Historical context (history of this issue; context in the world)
  - Reliability of sources
* **- Historical analogies**

G = Goals
* - What are my main goals? Are they realistic?
  - Generate options to achieve these goals. Are they ethical?

E = Effects
* **- Predict unintended consequences.**
* **- Play out the options. What could go wrong?**

*Denotes topics emphasized in this lesson

- **Identify any underlying problems:** The underlying problem could be economic (slave labor versus free labor) or it could be racist (prejudice against African Americans). While British abolitionists framed the problem as an economic challenge of changing from slave to free labor, many abolitionists in America framed the problem in the U.S. as a fundamentally racist issue, in addition to a means of economic profit. Another underlying problem is the Constitution, which recognized slavery and protected the rights of slaveowners to recapture runaway slaves. Politically, both parties needed and depended upon their supporters in the South despite disagreements over slavery because it was the only way to keep the parties together. One of the more brilliant abolitionist strategies was to

reframe the issue of the gag rule from a debate over slavery itself to a debate over constitutional rights (the right of petition). Many more people were sympathetic to abolitionists on the issue of constitutional rights.

- **Consider other points of view:** Students should consider (something many abolitionists did not do) the viewpoints of non-slaveholding whites in the South. Was there a way to appeal to them? How did white workers nationwide see slavery? (Generally, they wanted to make sure African Americans did not come north to compete with them for jobs.) Political leaders in both parties had reason to minimize the slavery issue to prevent a controversy that might hurt their party or their chances for reelection.
- **Ask about context:** Students could ask a number of questions about context: What was happening in terms of slavery in the United States at that time? (There was a large slave revolt, Nat Turner's Rebellion, in 1831. Southerners were not in a mood to compromise on slavery after this insurrection—they were too afraid.) What is happening in terms of slavery in other countries? (There was a large slave rebellion in Jamaica, a British colony. The British reacted by emancipating the slaves.)
- **Ask about analogies:** Abolitionism was successful in Britain, whereas it faced much more opposition in the United States. One important difference was that slavery was limited to the overseas British Empire, and was not practiced in Britain itself. But slavery existed right in the United States, including in its capital. Abolitionism was never as popular in the United States as it was in Britain, so American abolitionists had to use different strategies.
- **Reflect on your goals:** Is the primary goal to end slavery or preserve the Union? Differences on these two goals split the abolitionist movement. Those who wanted to end slavery were not interested in compromise, whereas those who wanted to preserve the union kept trying to work out compromises.
- **Predict unintended consequences:** Several consequences are explained in Handout 3
- **Play out options:** Many abolitionists became outcasts to their neighbors. Friends of abolitionists were told that they should stop associating with such fanatics. And some abolitionists were subjected to violent attacks.

SOURCES

"Abolition, Anti-Slavery Movements, and the Rise of the Sectional Controversy." Part of the Library of Congress Exhibit, *African American Odyssey*. Available at: http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/aaohtml/exhibit/aopart3.html

David Walker's Appeal. Revised edition. New York: Hill and Wang, 1965.

Henretta, James, et al. *America's History*. New York: Bedford, 2000, Vol. 1, Chapter 13.

Feller, Daniel. *The Jacksonian Promise*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, pp. 110–4.

Kohl, Lawrence. *The Politics of Individualism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989, pp. 174-6.

Mayer, Henry. *All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998, Chapters 3–16.

Mintz, Steven. *Moralists and Modernizers*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, pp. 117–142.

Richards, Leonard. *"Gentlemen of Property and Standing": Anti-Abolition Mobs in Jacksonian America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970, Chapters 1 and 2.

Richards, Leonard. "The Jacksonians and Slavery" in Lewis Perry and Michael Fellman, editors, *Antislavery Reconsidered*. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1979, pp. 99–118.

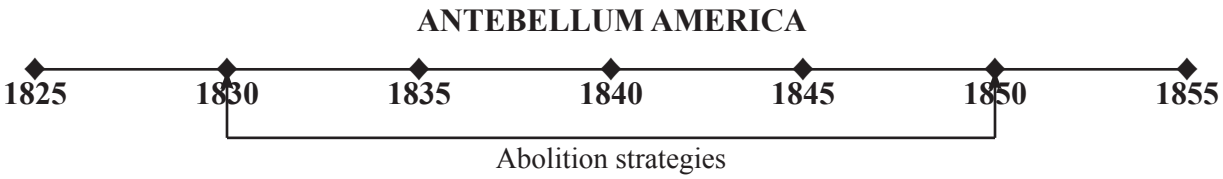
LESSON 5: ABOLITIONISM

Vocabulary

- Abolition—To do away with something (in this case, slavery)
- Gradual emancipation—Slaves would be freed over a period of years or decades
- American Colonization Society—A group that wanted to send freed slaves to Africa
- *Walker's Appeal*—Pamphlet in which the African American author David Walker argues that slavery is so horrible that slaves should revolt and overthrow their masters
- William Lloyd Garrison—Leading abolitionist who published *The Liberator*
- Prudence Crandall—An abolitionist who started a school for African American girls
- Elijah Lovejoy—Owner of an antislavery newspaper who was killed by a proslavery mob
- Gag rule—Under it, Congress did not read or discuss petitions regarding slavery
- Angelina and Sarah Grimke—Abolitionist sisters who published newspaper notices showing the horrors of slavery
- John Brown—Led a slave rebellion in 1859
- *Uncle Tom's Cabin*—Abolitionist novel by Harriet Beecher Stowe

LESSON 5: ABOLITIONISM

Student Handout 1: Problem



You are an abolitionist leader in the 1830s and 1840s. You are opposed to slavery and believe it should be stopped. You know from the accounts of runaway slaves that slaves are being mistreated, and you believe that slavery contradicts the ideals of the Declaration of Independence. How can slavery exist in a free society?

PROBLEM 1—ABOLITIONIST PUBLIC POSITION ON SLAVERY

Which of the following positions will you take in public in regard to slavery? You can pick only one (or substitute your own idea):

A. Slavery must end completely, it must end soon, and slaveowners should receive no compensation for their lost "property"
B. Slavery must end completely and soon, but slaveowners should be compensated
C. Slavery must end completely, but gradually, and slaveowners should be compensated
D. Slavery must not be able to expand to new territories or states. If the number of slave states remains the same while the number of free states increases, slavery will gradually decline
E. Your own idea

PROBLEM 2—PUBLIC POSITION ON AFRICAN AMERICANS AFTER SLAVERY

Which of the following positions will you take in public in regard to African Americans after slavery is ended? You can pick only one:

A. Equal rights for African Americans, including the right to vote
B. No position on African Americans after slavery. Americans will work out the position of African Americans gradually after slavery ends
C. Freed slaves should be sent to Africa, back to their roots
D. Your own idea

PROBLEM 3—ABOLITIONIST STRATEGIES

Which of the following strategies will you use in order to stop slavery? You can pick as many as you'd like, but you must identify the three choices you favor the most.

A. Arrange demonstrations against companies that use cotton from slave plantations
B. Make speeches in Northern cities about the evils of slavery

C. Make speeches in Southern cities about the evils of slavery
D. Start a political party against slavery. If people have the opportunity to vote for abolition, it could bring an end to slavery.
E. Boycott slave-plantation products
F. Write pamphlets and books about the evils of slavery. These would be factual and supported by reliable sources, and would point out the documented atrocities of slavery. Next, distribute these pamphlets and books all over the country. Finally, write articles and editorials in newspapers to the same effect.
G. Write novels (fiction) about the evils of slavery
H. Send petitions to Congress about the evils of slavery
I. Join the abolitionist movement with the movement for equal rights for women, and allow women to speak to audiences of both men and women
J. Launch protests in the North against Northern officials who catch runaway slaves
K. Provide funding and organization to smuggle guns to the South to start slave uprisings
L. Organize violent protests against companies that use slave crops, such as cotton, or against banks or insurance companies that help slave plantations
M. Call on slaves everywhere to rebel against their masters and fight their way to freedom
N. Your own idea(s)

LESSON 5: ABOLITIONISM

Student Handout 2: Arguments

Arguments about taking a public position in opposition to slavery:

1. Slavery is evil, and there should be no compromise with evil. Americans certainly should not say that slavery should be abolished gradually. Slaves are suffering every day that it continues. Likewise, compensating owners would essentially be paying them for their evil deeds.
2. The American Revolution stood for liberty for everyone ("All men are created equal"). Slaves could write a Declaration of Independence with a list of abuses longer and even worse than those in the original Declaration. Americans should feel ashamed of slavery—they are hypocrites if they don't free all slaves immediately.
3. If slaves were white, Americans wouldn't be talking about gradual emancipation or working within the limits of the Constitution; first, all Americans, even abolitionists, need to confront their own racist perspective.
4. The American Revolution was all about questioning and resisting those with power. In America, those with power are the slaveowners and their allies.
5. The Constitution was a compromise with slavery—it is part of the problem. Americans should change or eliminate the Constitution, since it is a compromise with evil. According to William Lloyd Garrison, Americans should not admire a document "dripping as it is with human blood." True justice is a higher moral law than the Constitution.
6. There is no need to take too radical a position. Slavery is ending on its own. Slaveowners in Virginia are already selling slaves to other states. With slavery unprofitable in Virginia and with few slaves left, Virginia—once the cornerstone of the slave-owning South—will gradually come to support ending slavery.
7. Pushing too hard to end slavery will just cause a backlash against abolition. Using harsh language or calling the Constitution a deal with the devil is not going to be effective at ending slavery.
8. Some slavery proponents argue that slaves are better off than workers in the North. Are they proposing that Northern workers be enslaved in order to improve their conditions?
9. Slaves should be enraged by the evils of slavery and rise up in rebellion. Slaves in Santo Domingo and Haiti rose up to overthrow slavery; those in the U.S. can and should do the same.
10. The way to end slavery is through compromise with slaveholders, who have all the power in the South. The more trade the North and South have, the more interdependent the two regions will become. Needing Northern business, Southerners will be ready to compromise on slavery. Slavery is evil, but ending it requires a practical approach. Abolitionists have to negotiate with slaveowners. People of good will in both the North and South can unite to end slavery.
11. The state of Virginia debated a bill for the gradual emancipation of slavery, but defeated it. The idea of compromise on slavery is unrealistic.
12. Freedom is a universal ideal for the whole world, not just the United States

13. We have to support the Constitution, even though it compromised on slavery. The Constitution is the basis of our Union, our experiment in democracy, so it should not be attacked. Keeping our country united is more important than ending slavery. Henry Clay argued, "Their [slaves'] liberty, if it were possible, could only be established by violating the incontestable powers of the States, and subverting the Union. And beneath the ruins of the Union would be buried, sooner or later, the liberty of both races."

Arguments about the fate of African Americans after slavery:

1. The American Colonization Society feels that ex-slaves should be sent back to Africa. It is a charitable group, which has raised money to help African Americans make the journey. African Americans simply can't make it in American society, the ACS believes. There is great prejudice against them, and they won't be able to compete with whites for work or business. If freed slaves stay in America, there will be a race war at some point.
2. One of the advocates for re-colonization to Africa stated, "It is not right that men should possess that freedom, for which they are entirely unprepared, [and] which can only prove injurious to themselves and others." It is not right to simply free slaves and leave them on their own in America.
3. The idea of colonization continues prejudice against African Americans. It gives whites a solution—removing African Americans from the country—that avoids confronting racism. The country needs to abolish slavery and "to recognize people of color as brethren and countrymen who have been unjustly treated…" African Americans need to become full, equal citizens of the United States. How can the country do anything less than provide true equality for African Americans after slavery? The ideal in America is of equality for all people.
4. African Americans should be educated so they can achieve true equality

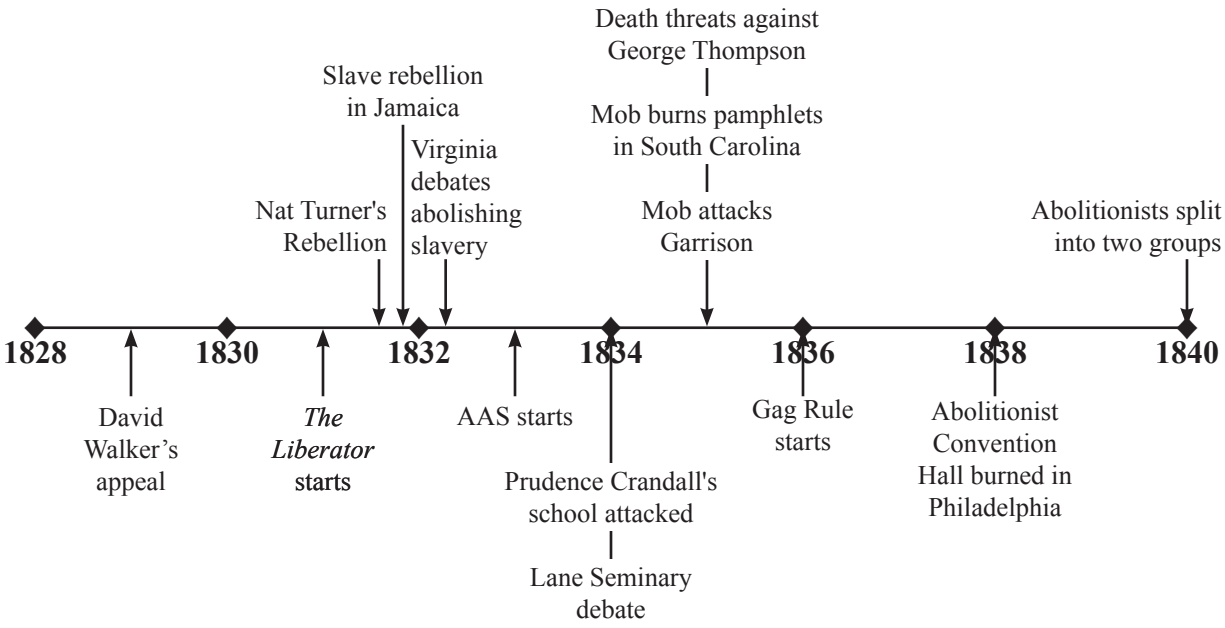
Arguments about strategies:

1. Publishing radical pamphlets and other written material might lead to lawsuits for libel, which could bankrupt the abolitionist movement. Better to be more moderate in opposition to slavery.
2. Options A thru I (Handout 1) are all rights protected by the Constitution. Abolitionists should offer their views, which will lead to a thorough discussion of slavery. That's the beauty of democracy.
3. Options J thru M (Handout 1) support violence, which is wrong and will only lead to a backlash against abolitionist ideas.

LESSON 5: ABOLITIONISM

Student Handout 3: Outcomes

KEY EVENTS IN ABOLITION HISTORY



PROBLEM 1—ABOLITIONIST PUBLIC POSITION ON SLAVERY

1. Many African American and white abolitionists supported Option A because they felt it was wrong to compensate owners for their immoral participation in slavery. Others wanted to compensate (Option B), and still others wanted to go more slowly (Option C). None of these positions were very popular. Eventually, the Republican Party organized behind the idea in Option D that they would only oppose the extension of slavery. The position expressed in Option D was much more effective at mobilizing voters. Northerners were much more inclined to stop the spread of slavery, which threatened free labor, than they were to fight slavery itself.
2. *Walker's Appeal* was a call for slave rebellion proposed by David Walker, a free African American. As predicted, when it spread to the South, it caused extreme outrage among slaveowners. However, it was also criticized widely in the North for being too radical.
3. The abolitionist movement was split over how radical it should be. William Lloyd Garrison and other white abolitionists, as well as many African American abolitionists, pushed for immediate abolition without compensation to slaveowners. They were seen by other abolitionists as fanatical for their unwillingness to compromise. James Birney argued that the radical abolitionists wanted to break the Union in order to abolish slavery. Birney argued that people like Garrison did not support American democracy; they wanted to destroy the American system to bring about true reform. The movement split into two groups: the American Anti-Slavery Society (Garrison) and the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.

4. Abolitionists were repeatedly subjected to violence, even in the North. For example, Prudence Crandall's school for African American girls was destroyed; a convention hall in Philadelphia where an antislavery meeting had been held was burned down; abolitionist speaker George Thompson received death threats; a mob in Charleston, South Carolina, took abolitionist pamphlets from the post office and burned them; and William Lloyd Garrison was almost killed by an angry mob. Elijah Lovejoy, an antislavery newspaper editor in Illinois, was killed by a mob as it tried to burn down his building. These mobs were composed of a variety of groups: whites afraid that free African Americans would mix into their communities; people involved in the colonization societies who resented attacks on their projects by Garrison and other more extreme abolitionists; and middle-class Americans who feared that the abolitionists would tear the country apart, ruining the economy along with it. Almost all the mobs were influenced or organized by the middle class.
5. Abolitionists, especially extreme abolitionists such as William Lloyd Garrison, were disliked by both political parties. The Democratic Party was dependent on support from the South, so it consistently supported anti-abolitionist measures, such as the gag rule (a rule to prevent reading or discussing abolitionist petitions in Congress). The Whig Party was more favorable to curbing or abolishing slavery, but Whigs felt they were defending Northern rights and the Constitution, not extremists who wanted immediate abolition. They referred to abolitionists as "crackpots" and "fanatics."
6. The agitation by abolitionists and the resulting reactions by some slaveholders made it steadily more difficult to compromise over slavery. In that sense, abolitionism was a cause of the Civil War.

William Lloyd Garrison

PROBLEM 2—PUBLIC POSITION ON AFRICAN AMERICANS AFTER SLAVERY

African American abolitionists (as well as some white abolitionists, such as William Lloyd Garrison) wanted African Americans to receive equal treatment with whites after slavery ended, just as free African Americans should have received equal rights and respect at the time of slavery (Option A). But most white Americans, including many abolitionists, were not in favor of true equality for freed slaves. As mentioned, members of the American Colonization Society wanted freed slaves to go back to Africa (Option C). An example of this prejudice occurred when Prudence Crandall, a white schoolteacher, started a school in Connecticut for African American girls. The political leaders and white citizens in the town warned Crandall to close the school, saying that it made the entire town look bad. The school was repeatedly attacked and forced to close. Taking a principled stance in favor of equality for freed slaves brought great opposition from racist American society.

Slavery was abolished during the Civil War, but freedmen were not given equal rights. New forms of discrimination appeared during the Reconstruction period, such as "black codes" and Jim Crow laws (segregation laws). Some forms of discrimination were eliminated during the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, but racism still lingers in America.

PROBLEM 3—ABOLITIONIST STRATEGIES

1. The abolitionists used a number of strategies, including Options B (speeches in the North), D (forming a political party), F (distributing pamphlets), G (novels), H (petitions), and I (equal rights for women). A few abolitionists helped fund a slave revolt (Option M) when they supported John Brown in 1859. There were few, if any, boycotts (Option E), violent protests (Option L) or protests against companies (Option A). And there were few volunteers willing to give abolitionist speeches in the South (Option C).
2. In 1831, William Lloyd Garrison started *The Liberator*, a newspaper that published antislavery materials for decades without interruption (Option F). The newspaper had a major effect on abolition in the U.S. In the first issue, Garrison stated, "I will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice [about slavery]. On this subject I do not wish to think or speak, or write, with moderation."
3. Angelina and Sarah Grimke published samples from Southern newspapers on runaway slaves, which revealed the great brutality of slavery (also Option F). For example, "Ten dollars reward for my woman Siby, very much scarred about the neck and ears by whipping," and "One hundred dollars reward for a negro fellow Pompey, 40 years old, he is branded on the left jaw." Due to improvements in transportation and the start of a pamphlet distribution service called the American Tract (Pamphlet) Society, the abolitionists were able to reach a larger number of people and educate them with their literature.

Angelina and Sarah Grimke

4. Congress passed a gag rule that antislavery petitions (Option H) would not be printed or debated, but ignored. This decision led to decades of agitation to reinstate the right of petition, including 400,000 petitions with nearly one million signatures protesting the gag rule.
5. Some abolitionists formed the Liberty Party (Option D), which received only about 1% of the vote in 1844 (although it may have helped decide the outcome of the election). These abolitionists felt that the best way to end slavery without violence was to work through the American political system. William Lloyd Garrison's followers believed that a third party would corrupt the abolitionist movement because it would have to take positions on many issues and fight to get people elected. The party would have to make compromises in order to attract more voters and candidates with different views. Abolition, not election, was the true goal. Those opposed to a third party wanted to change the moral vision of voters, which would, in turn, change the political system.

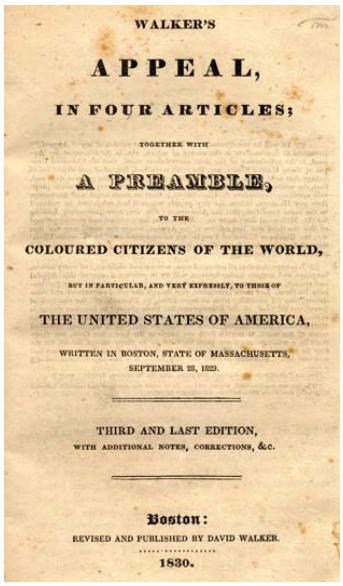
6. Some abolitionists felt that bringing about female equality within the abolitionist movement would unite the whole movement over the issue of equal rights (Option I). Others felt that women's rights would increase opposition (some men, rightly or wrongly, might change their minds and start to oppose abolition if women became involved in political matters), and distract the movement from its primary goal of abolition.
7. One of the most effective strategies came in the form of the novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which sold 300,000 copies and influenced public opinion in the North (Option G). Many Northerners who had no experience with slavery plantations formed their view from the novel.

LESSON 5: ABOLITIONISM

Student Handout 4: Primary Source

***WALKER'S APPEAL*, 1829 (excerpt)**

My dearly beloved Brethren and Fellow Citizens:


WALKER'S

APPEAL,

IN FOUR ARTICLES;

TOGETHER WITH

A PREAMBLE,

TO THE

COLOURED CITIZENS OF THE WORLD,

BUT IN PARTICULAR, AND VERY EXPRESSLY, TO THOSE OF

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

WRITTEN IN BOSTON, STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS,
SEPTEMBER 28, 1829.

THIRD AND LAST EDITION,
WITH ADDITIONAL NOTES, CORRECTIONS, &c.

Boston:
REVISED AND PUBLISHED BY DAVID WALKER.
1830.

Having travelled over a considerable portion of these United States…the result of my observations has warranted the full and unshakened conviction, that we (colored people of these United States) are the most degraded, wretched, and abject set of beings that ever lived since the world began…

I am fully aware, in making this appeal to my much afflicted and suffering brethren, that I shall not only be assailed by those whose greatest earthly desires are, to keep us in abject ignorance and wretchedness, and who are of the firm conviction that heaven has designed us and our children to be slaves and beasts of burden to them and their children.—I say, I do not only expect to be held up to the public as an ignorant, impudent and restless disturber of the public peace, by such avaricious [greedy] creatures, as well as a mover of insubordination—and perhaps put in prison or to death, for giving a superficial exposition of our miseries, and exposing tyrants… Yea, the jealous ones among us will perhaps use more abject subtlety by affirming that this work is not worth pursuing; that we are well situated and there is no use in trying to better our condition, for we cannot. I will ask one question here.—Can our condition be any worse?—Can it be more mean and abject? If there are any changes, will they not be for the better, though they may appear for the worse at first? Can they get us any lower? Where can they get us? They are afraid to treat us worse, for they know well, the day they do it they are gone. But against all accusations which may or can be preferred against me, I appeal to heaven for my motive in writing—who knows that my object is, if possible, to awaken in the breasts of my afflicted, degraded and slumbering brethren, a spirit of enquiry and investigation respecting our miseries and wretchedness in this Republican Land of Liberty!!!!!

…And as the inhuman system of slavery, is the source from which most of our miseries proceed, I shall begin with that curse to nations;… The fact is, the labor of slaves comes so cheap to the avaricious usurpers, and is (as they think) of such great utility to the country where it exists, that those who are actuated by sordid avarice only, overlook the evils, which will as sure as the Lord lives, follow after the good… Does the Lord condescend to hear their cries and see their tears in consequence of oppression? Will he let the oppressors rest comfortably and happy always? Will he not cause the very children of the oppressors to rise up against them, and oftimes put them to death? "God works in many ways his wonders to perform."

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What can you tell about the author, David Walker, from this appeal to African Americans?
2. What do you think the responses were by various groups?
3. How convincing do you find his arguments?
4. Should *Walker's Appeal* be considered a great document in U.S. history? Explain.

LESSON 6: MEXICO AND OREGON, 1846

Teacher Pages

OVERVIEW

The decisions over Mexico and Oregon came simultaneously, which sets up an intriguing decision-making lesson. Students will be able to explore how events in one area influenced decisions in the other area.

VOCABULARY

- James K. Polk—President of the U.S. during the Mexican War
- Manifest Destiny—The belief that Americans were destined to spread democracy to the entire continent
- Rio Grande—River that Americans claimed should be the southern and western boundary of Texas
- "Oregon fever"—Huge increase of American emigrants to Oregon in the 1840s
- General Zachary Taylor—American general in the Mexican War
- John Slidell—Diplomat sent by President Polk to negotiate with Mexico
- Mexican War—Fought between the U.S. and Mexico mainly over the Texas boundary
- 54°40'—Northern boundary of Oregon Territory (in modern-day Canada). Some Americans demanded all the Oregon Territory up to this line.

DECISION-MAKING SKILLS EMPHASIZED

- Identify underlying problems
- Consider other points of view
- Recognize assumptions
- Ask about context
- Ask about sources
- Set realistic goals
- Generate options
- Predict untended consequences
- Play out options

LESSON PLAN

A. IN-DEPTH LESSON (one 40-minute class period)

Procedure**:**

Distribute Handout 1 and have students pair up and decide what they will do. Give time for students to ask questions. Bring the class back together and discuss their decisions as well as the reasons for them. Distribute Handout 2 with the outcomes, or tell the class what actually happened. After students have examined the outcomes, distribute Handout 3 containing President Polk's War Message. Have students answer the questions, one of which asks students to evaluate his arguments in the light of the causes.

Reflecting on Decision Making:

Ask students which of President Polk's pre-1846 decisions they would have changed. Were they boxed in because of previous decisions? This discussion will lead to a great analysis of decision-making skills, especially consequences. Keep focusing their attention back to **P-A-G-E**.

Putting the Actual Decisions Into Historical Context:

Ask students whether the Mexican War and the compromise on Oregon were the results more of historical forces or the result of decisions by President Polk. (Clearly the power relationships, geography, emigration, public opinion, politics, and other historical forces were important. However, it could be argued that in this case, President Polk's personal characteristics and decisions to negotiate from strength were more important.)

Connecting to Today:

To what extent should the U.S. negotiate from a position of strength? To what extent should American leaders compromise? What role does public opinion play in negotiations? In what ways was the 1846 war with Mexico similar to the 2003 war in Iraq? (According to historian Paul Springer, both lacked a clear war aim by the United States, both lasted longer than expected, both American occupying forces faced guerrilla opposition, and both had a smaller American force using better technology to defeat a larger enemy army.)

Troubleshooting:

Since geography is important to both problems, use the maps to clear up confusion over location and demands over territory. Some students may benefit from an explanation that 54°40' is an imaginary latitude line on a map. Latitude is the measure of how far a point is north or south from the equator (Longitude measures how far east and west a point is from the Prime Meridian.) The distance is measured in degrees, and the points in between are measured in minutes.

B. QUICK MOTIVATOR (15–20 minutes)

Assign Handout 1 for homework. In class, have students pair up and discuss their choices for three minutes or so. Ask for a show of hands for each option for Mexico and briefly discuss their reasons. Repeat this process for Oregon. Distribute Handout 2 and have students comment for homework on what they learned from these outcomes.

TEACHER NOTES FOR EXPANDING DISCUSSION

(For outcomes for students, see Handout 2)

The situations in Texas, California, and Oregon were all quite complicated. For example, one of the big problems with sending Slidell as diplomat was his designation as a regular diplomat when Mexico and the U.S. did not have regular diplomatic ties. If the Mexican government spoke to a regular diplomat under conditions in which they had broken diplomatic ties to the U.S. (over Texas annexation), it would have appeared as giving in to the Mexican public. The Mexican government asked that Slidell's title be changed so they could speak to him, but the U.S. saw no need to change. In Oregon, the British asked that the issue be submitted to arbitration, but Polk refused, feeling the U.S. would get more from direct negotiations. Anything could come out of arbitration, but the U.S. had the stronger position in Oregon, so negotiations would yield clearly positive results.

Historians have widely divergent views of the Mexican War and Polk's decision-making leading up to the war. Historians Bergeron and Pletcher, for example, give Polk high marks for being appropriately aggressive. Bauer, Stephanson, and especially Dusinberre are much more critical of Polk for provoking war (see sources).

DECISION-MAKING ANALYSIS:

P = Problem
* **- Identify any underlying problem(s)**
* - Consider other points of view
* - What are my assumptions? Emotions?

A = Ask for information (about)
* - Historical context (history of this issue; context in the world)
* - Reliability of sources
  - Historical analogies

G = Goals
* - What are my main goals? Are they realistic?
* **- Generate options to achieve these goals. Are they ethical?**

E = Effects
* **- Predict unintended consequences.**
* **- Play out the options. What could go wrong?**

*Denotes topics emphasized in this lesson

- **Identify any underlying problems:** One underlying problem is the increased influence of public opinion due to the expansion and the availability of newspapers. More people read newspapers, so their views had to be taken into consideration.

- **Consider other points of view:** Students should consider the points of view of the Mexican government, the British government, the Mexican people, Hispanics in New Mexico, and the British, among others.
- **Recognize assumptions, emotions:** Americans assumed they were the aggrieved party (as did the Mexicans, about themselves), and that their expansion into an area was actually good for the people being conquered because Americans were spreading democracy (an "empire of liberty").
- **Ask about context:** Students could ask a number of questions about context: How strong is the Texas claim to the Rio Grande River as the boundary? (Very weak. The area is very lightly settled, but most of the people there are Mexicans, not Texans. The Nueces River was the traditional border of the Mexican state there. The extension of the claim westward up to the Rocky Mountains is even weaker. This huge area was never part of or claimed by Texas. It is simply a way for Texas to extend its territory into New Mexico.) How strong is the American army? (Not very strong. It would have to be built up to fight Mexico or Britain. However, the Mexican army is even weaker, and their lack of money will not allow them to build up their army.)
- **Ask about sources:** Some of the information that President Polk received was inaccurate. For example, the rumors that Britain was supplying arms to the Mexican government to put down the rebellion in California were entirely false. The American ambassador in London claimed that British leaders were ready to negotiate on Oregon. Did he receive reliable information for that claim? (Yes.)
- **Reflect on your goals:** Is the primary goal with regard to Mexico to adjust the border dispute, settle money claims to Americans, or gain control over California?
- **Consider ethicality:** Is it right to fight a war in which one's country takes territory from the other country?
- **Predict unintended consequences:** Several consequences are explained in Handout 2.
- **Play out option:** Once the U.S. decided to fight Mexico, many Americans wanted to take over all of Mexico. They would reason: Why should we take just half the country after we defeated them in battle?

SOURCES

Bauer, K. *The Mexican War, 1846–1848*. New York: Macmillan, 1974, Chapters 1, 2.

Bergeron, Paul. *The Presidency of James K. Polk*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1987, Chapters 4, 5.

Dusinberre, William. *Slavemaster President*. New York: Oxford, 2003, Chapter 11.

Henretta, James, et al. *America's History*. New York: Bedford, 2000, Vol. 1, Chapter 13.

Holt, Michael. *The Fate of their Country: Politicians, Slavery Extension, and the Coming of the Civil War*. New York: Hill & Wang, 2004, Chapters 1, 2.

Howe, Daniel Walker. *What Hath God Wrought*. New York: Oxford, University Press, 2007, Chapter 19.

Pletcher, David. *The Diplomacy of Annexation*. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1973, Chapters 9–13.

Salvucci, Linda. "Mexico, Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Secondary-School United States History Textbooks." *The History Teacher*. Vol. 24, No. 2, (Feb. 1991), pp. 203–222.

Springer, Paul. "What Students Need to Know About America's Wars." *Foreign Policy Research Institute*. Essay based on lecture, July 26, 2008. Available at http://www.fpri.org/education/americaswars1

Stephanson, Anders. *Manifest Destiny*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1995, pp. 35–37.

LESSON 6: MEXICO AND OREGON, 1846

Vocabulary

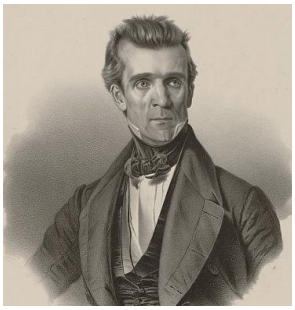
- James K. Polk—President of the U.S. during the Mexican War
- Manifest Destiny—The belief that Americans were destined to spread democracy to the entire continent
- Rio Grande—River that Americans claimed should be the southern and western boundary of Texas
- "Oregon fever"—Huge increase of American emigrants to Oregon in the 1840s
- General Zachary Taylor—American general in the Mexican War
- John Slidell—Diplomat sent by President Polk to negotiate with Mexico
- Mexican War—Fought between the U.S. and Mexico mainly over the Texas boundary
- 54°40'—Northern boundary of Oregon Territory (in modern-day Canada). Some Americans demanded all the Oregon Territory up to this line.

LESSON 6: MEXICO AND OREGON, 1846

Student Handout 1: Problems

ANTEBELLUM AMERICA

Mexico & Oregon



President James Polk

The year is 1846 and you are President James K. Polk. You face two foreign policy crises at the same time: one with Mexico over Texas and California, and the other with Britain over Oregon. While each of the crises has its own distinctive features, your decision on one may affect what you can do in the other.

Problem 1—Texas:

Texas has spelled trouble for Mexico for decades. When Texas declared itself an independent republic, a Mexican army unsuccessfully tried to end the rebellion. Last year, the U.S. Congress voted to make the Republic of Texas part of the United States and Texas accepted statehood. This action made the Mexican public very angry, since Texas had been a part of Mexico, and Mexicans were still hoping to get it back. Mexicans, in general, including many leaders, still want Texas back, preferring war over allowing Texas to remain part of the U.S. Meanwhile, many Americans want the rest of the territory of Mexico from Texas all the way out to California (about 40% of Mexico's land). They claim that the U.S. has a "Manifest Destiny" given by God to spread American democracy across the whole continent. Concurrently, Mexico and the U.S. are having a border dispute. Americans want the area up to the Rio Grande, which would make Texas larger. Mexicans want the area up to the Nueces River, which would make Texas smaller. The Mexicans claim that the Nueces River was the traditional boundary of Texas, and that it should stay there.

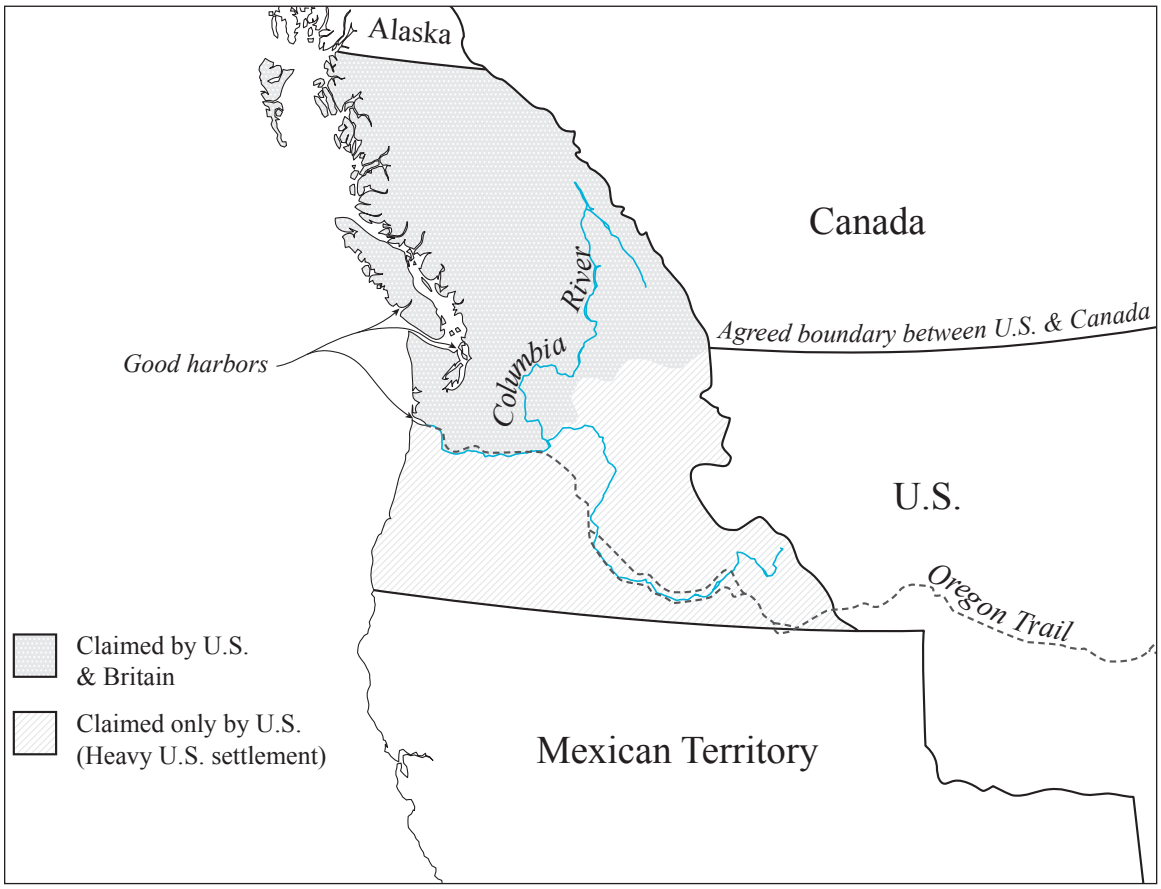
The Mexican government owes the U.S. government money. In 1843, Mexican leaders agreed in a settlement to pay Americans about $2 million for claims against the Mexican government (the actual claims were over $6 million). But Mexico hasn't been making payments for over two years—not even interest payments. The government itself is weak. About a year ago, the people of California overthrew Mexican authority in their state. The Mexican government decided to recruit and outfit an army to put down the rebellion, but couldn't raise the money. To make matters worse, the British may interfere in California. There are British ships in the area that could threaten American interests, and there are rumors of the British offering weapons to the Mexican people in order to help the Mexican government retake California.

There is a Mexican army near the Rio Grande that could attack Texas. However, it isn't clear if that army is loyal to the Mexican government. The commander might decide instead to march the army to Mexico City and overthrow the government.

What will your policy be with regard to Mexico on these issues? You may choose more than one:

1. Demand all of the Mexican territory from the Rio Grande, west to the Pacific Ocean
2. Provoke a war with Mexico. Send soldiers into the disputed area between the Nueces and Rio Grande. If the Mexicans don't attack, the U.S. will get the disputed area for free. If they do attack, then U.S. public opinion will be united in favor of war against Mexico.
3. Send a diplomat to Mexico to buy the disputed area down to the Rio Grande and the area out to California. The U.S. would pay $20 million and cancel Mexico's debt to the U.S. in exchange for the disputed land to the Rio Grande and for California. The U.S. should try for a peaceful settlement of the dispute with Mexico.

4. Negotiate a compromise with the Mexicans, such as:
    - Texas would be returned to Mexico
    - Mexico would pay the debt owed to the U.S.
    - The U.S. would buy California for $10 million
    - Attack Mexico and take over the whole country



Problem 2—Oregon:

Americans want the Oregon Territory to become part of the U.S. Starting in 1843, thousands of American settlers have pushed into the southern part of Oregon along the Oregon Trail in what was referred to as "Oregon fever." There are few British settlers in the area, but the U.S. and Britain have an agreement for joint occupation of Oregon. The British Hudson Bay Company is making good profits from the fur trade north of the Columbia River (in the area claimed by Britain). Meanwhile, an American naval commander, Charles Wilkes, has reported on its wonderful harbors. New England merchants engaged in trade with China are very interested in these harbors. Britain agrees that the U.S. can keep the southern part of Oregon, but wants to keep the northern part and wants British trade ships to be able sail on the Columbia River.

Many Americans want the whole Oregon Territory, right up to Alaska, to be taken over by the U.S. In the 1844 election, you took the position that the U.S. should get all of Oregon, including the part the British claim. This position was very popular with western

state leaders and voters, helping you win the election. Still, the majority of Americans will accept a compromise where the U.S. will get about half the land in the Oregon area. Reports from the American ambassador in London indicate that the British do not want to fight over Oregon. He says the British can't offer a compromise themselves because they would look weak to the British public. They are waiting for a reasonable offer from the U.S. to settle the dispute.

What is your policy with regard to Britain on the Oregon Territory? You may choose more than one:

Demand all of the Oregon Territory

A. Provoke a war with Britain. Send soldiers into the disputed area in the north of the Oregon Territory. If the British don't attack, the U.S. will get the disputed area for free. If they do, then U.S. public opinion will be united for war against Britain.
B. Send a diplomat to England to buy the whole of the Oregon Territory. This will be a peaceful settlement.
C. Negotiate a compromise with the British. Tell them the U.S. will settle for some of the land in the disputed area.
D. Declare war on Britain and invade Canada with the intention of taking over all of it

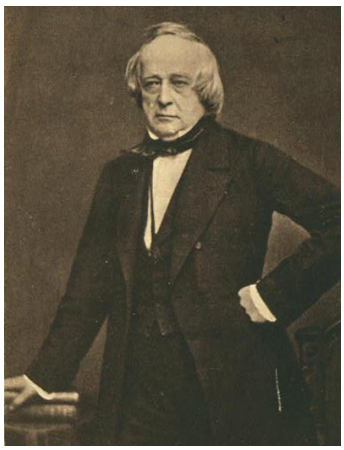
LESSON 6: MEXICO AND OREGON, 1846

Student Handout 2: Outcomes

Problem 1: Texas

President Polk decided to provoke Mexico by claiming all the territory to the Rio Grande (Option A) and by sending American troops into the disputed area (Option B). According to some historians, Polk took a tough stance, thinking that the Mexican government would give the U.S. what it wanted in the negotiations. Other historians see the decision to send troops into the disputed area as a deliberate provocation of war. Polk repeatedly asked General Zachary Taylor to move his troops closer to the Rio Grande. The president had encouraged Texas leaders in their claim to the Rio Grande.

Polk did not demand all of California, but sent a diplomat, John Slidell, to offer to buy the area (Option C). The Mexican government refused to meet with the diplomat because it had specifically said that the only issue to be discussed was the annexation of Texas by the U.S. Instead, the U.S. sent Slidell to negotiate the boundary at the Rio Grande and to buy Mexican land in California. The Mexican public was expecting the government to get Texas back, not negotiate away more land to the Americans. President Polk felt the United States had to take strong action in response to this refusal by the Mexican government in order to maintain respect for the United States. He threatened war if the Mexican government did not see the American diplomat.



John Slidell

Although there were no negotiations over California, that area was involved in the president's thinking. Before fighting started, Polk ordered American naval commander John Sloat to occupy as many ports as possible in California if war should start. He also sent instructions for American leaders in the area to encourage separation from Mexico and to reassure the California rebels of American support.

Two important themes stand out about the president's thinking. First, he felt that Mexico was very weak, so the U.S. could take military action if negotiations failed. He always felt he was negotiating from a position of strength. Second, he misread the real situation of the Mexican government. He correctly saw the Mexicans as weak, but he wasn't aware of the political pressures on the government. For example, he never understood the reasons why it was so difficult for the Mexicans to negotiate with John Slidell.

The war with Mexico dragged on for more than a year. President Polk apparently hoped that after a short time, the Mexicans would recognize the hopelessness of the situation and return to negotiating with the U.S. It didn't happen that quickly. While most of the American public supported the war, there was continued criticism of the war aims and the

way the war was being fought. Some Americans supported the "All Mexico Movement," proposing that the U.S. take over all of Mexico (Option E). President Polk did not support taking all of Mexico, but he did state that he wanted to take several more Mexican provinces in addition to California and New Mexico.

The Mexican War had beneficial effects for the U.S., as the country gained an enormous amount of new land. In addition, America had shown its military strength by defeating a larger army. Americans' national pride, as well as pride in the U.S. military ("From the Halls of Montezuma [Mexico City]…" begins the official Marine Corps hymn), increased as a result of the war. Nevertheless, many Americans wondered if the war was justified. Was it right to convert a border dispute into a war to take land from a weaker country? Others put the blame on the Mexicans for their pride in refusing American offers to settle disputes. Generals Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott became war heroes, while other American officers gained experience that proved useful in the Civil War. The war clearly extended sectional tensions over the expansion of slavery, increasing the likelihood of armed conflict. Opponents and supporters of the expansion of slavery argued for years over the expansion of slavery into Mexico. About 1700 Americans died in combat, while 11,000 died of disease. Of course, casualties for Mexico were much higher and the effects of the war on Mexico were almost completely negative. However, if Mexican leaders had simply given in to American demands, they may well have been overthrown by angry Mexican citizens, so it is difficult to imagine them taking a different course than resistance, however futile.

A battle scene from the war

Problem 2: Oregon

President Polk decided to negotiate a compromise with the British over Oregon (Option D) taking the area up to 49° (the states of Oregon and Washington today), leaving the British the area north of that line, along with Vancouver Island and the right to navigate the Columbia River for several years. Polk had previously demanded all of the area, up to 54°40', but then decided to compromise. His tough words actually made it more difficult to negotiate. British leaders did not want to appear weak to the British public, which was outraged by Polk's demands. To compromise with the Americans after perceived insults

would have seemed cowardly. Meanwhile, expansionists in the U.S. were encouraged by Polk's strong language to pressure the government into taking everything.

Ironically, the basic outline of the final agreement had first been proposed more than two years earlier by an American diplomat to Britain, Louis McLane. At the beginning of his presidency, Polk proposed a compromise settlement, which a British diplomat, contrary to his orders, rejected. President Polk was insulted; he said repeatedly that the British had to make the next offer for compromise. The British, meanwhile, wouldn't make any offer, lest they look weak. After compromises on trade between the two countries, the British felt the political climate was right for proposing a compromise on Oregon.

As in the Texas case, President Polk wanted to negotiate from a position of strength. His strong statements, however, only made negotiations more difficult. With war looming with Mexico in the spring of 1846, Polk was more open to working out the compromise with Britain over Oregon, a compromise he could have had in 1843.

The settlement of the Oregon dispute was hailed as a great gain for the country. Nevertheless, the settlement divided the members of the Democratic Party, some of whom had wanted all of Oregon, and others who didn't want so much expansion.

LESSON 6: MEXICO AND OREGON, 1846

Student Handout 3: Primary Source

Message of President Polk, May 11, 1846

To the Senate and House of Representatives:

The existing state of the relations between the United States and Mexico renders it proper that I should bring the subject to the consideration of Congress…

The strong desire to establish peace with Mexico on liberal and honorable terms, and the readiness of this Government to regulate and adjust our boundary and other causes of difference with that power on such fair and equitable principles as would lead to permanent relations of the most friendly nature, induced me in September last to seek the reopening of diplomatic relations between the two countries… An envoy of the United States repaired to Mexico with full powers to adjust every existing difference. But though present on the Mexican soil by agreement between the two Governments, invested with full powers, and bearing evidence of the most friendly dispositions, his mission has been unavailing. The Mexican Government not only refused to receive him or listen to his propositions, but after a long-continued series of menaces have at last invaded our territory and shed the blood of our fellow-citizens on our own soil…

In my message at the commencement of the present session I informed you that upon the earnest appeal both of the Congress and convention of Texas I had ordered an efficient military force to take a position between the Nueces and the Del Norte. This had become necessary to meet a threatened invasion of Texas by the Mexican forces, for which extensive military preparations had been made. The invasion was threatened solely because Texas had determined, in accordance with a solemn resolution of the Congress of the United States, to annex herself to our Union, and under these circumstances it was plainly our duty to extend our protection over her citizens and soil…

The movement of the troops to the Del Norte was made by the commanding general under positive instructions to abstain from all aggressive acts toward Mexico or Mexican citizens and to regard the relations between that Republic and the United States as peaceful unless she should declare war or commit acts of hostility indicative of a state of war. He was specially directed to protect private property and respect personal rights.

...[W]e have been exerting our best efforts to propitiate her [Mexico's] good will. Upon the pretext that Texas, a nation as independent as herself, thought proper to unite its destinies with our own she [Mexico] has affected to believe that we have severed her rightful territory, and in official proclamations and manifestoes has repeatedly threatened to make war upon us for the purpose of reconquering Texas. In the meantime we have tried every effort at reconciliation. The cup of forbearance had been exhausted even before the recent information from the frontier of the Del Norte. But now, after reiterated

menaces, Mexico has passed the boundary of the United States, has invaded our territory and shed American blood upon the American soil. She has proclaimed that hostilities have commenced, and that the two nations are now at war.

As war exists, and, notwithstanding all our efforts to avoid it, exists by the act of Mexico herself, we are called upon by every consideration of duty and patriotism to vindicate with decision the honor, the rights, and the interests of our country.

Anticipating the possibility of a crisis like that which has arrived, instructions were given in August last, as a precautionary measure against invasion or threatened invasion, authorizing General Taylor, if the emergency required, to accept volunteers…

The most energetic and prompt measures and the immediate appearance in arms of a large and overpowering force are recommended to Congress as the most certain and efficient means of bringing the existing collision with Mexico to a speedy and successful termination.

In making these recommendations I deem it proper to declare that it is my anxious desire not only to terminate hostilities speedily, but to bring all matters in dispute between this Government and Mexico to an early and amicable adjustment; and in this view I shall be prepared to renew negotiations whenever Mexico shall be ready to receive propositions or to make propositions of her own…

James K. Polk

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What arguments does President Polk make to justify war against Mexico?
2. How effective do you think his arguments were?
3. Given what you know about the causes of the war, evaluate his arguments. Which arguments were strong and which weak?

LESSON 7: THE WILMOT PROVISO AND COMPROMISE OF 1850

Teacher Pages

OVERVIEW

As mentioned in Lesson 6, one of the outcomes of the Mexican War was an intensification of the debate over slavery. Suddenly, the country had to deal with the issue of whether slavery should be allowed to spread into all this new territory. The lesson focuses on this difficult issue that refused to go away. Would students have supported the Wilmot Proviso or the Compromise of 1850?

VOCABULARY

- Mexican War—Fought between the U.S. and Mexico mainly over the Texas boundary
- Missouri Compromise—Missouri would enter the Union as a slave state, but there would be no more slavery north of 36°30'
- Wilmot Proviso—Bill to prevent slavery in any territory taken from Mexico
- Popular sovereignty—The idea that the people in each territory should vote to decide whether to allow slavery
- Fugitive Slave Law of 1850—Law that forced Northerners to return runaway slaves
- Henry Clay—Senator known as "The Great Compromiser" who originated the Compromise of 1850
- Compromise of 1850—California admitted as a free state; popular sovereignty in New Mexico; a stronger fugitive slave law; ended slave trade in Washington D.C.; border settled in favor of New Mexico
- Free Soil Party—This party was against the expansion of slavery into the territories
- *Uncle Tom's Cabin*—Antislavery novel written by Harriett Beecher Stowe

DECISION-MAKING SKILLS EMPHASIZED

- Identify underlying problems
- Ask about context
- Ask about analogies
- Generate options—are they ethical?
- Predict unintended consequences
- Play out options

LESSON PLAN

A. IN-DEPTH LESSON (one 40-minute class period)

Procedure**:**

Distribute Handout 1 and have students pair up and decide what they will do. Then tell students that they can ask one of the three questions at the bottom of the handout. Keep them in pairs, and have them all vote on which question they wish to have answered. Read the suggested answer (Handout 5) to the question that got the top vote. Have students, still in pairs, reevaluate their decision in the light of the new information. Bring the class back together and discuss their decisions as well as the reasons for them. Distribute Handout 2 with the outcomes or tell the class what actually happened. Next, distribute Handout 3 and have students pair up and decide what they will do. Bring the class back together and discuss their decisions as well as the reasons for them. Distribute Handout 4 with the outcomes or tell the class what actually happened.

Reflecting on Decision Making:

Ask students how well they did on decision making on these problems. Which decision-making skills were especially important in making decisions about these issues? Ask students what they did well or poorly on in terms of the **P-A-G-E** analysis of decision-making. Discuss their answers.

Putting the Actual Decisions Into Historical Context:

Ask students whether the Compromise of 1850 was due more to historical forces or the result of decisions by a few individuals. (Henry Clay and several other leaders played important roles, but historical forces—such as geography, the balance in the Senate, and agitation by abolitionists—seemed to shape events also.)

Connecting to Today:

Ask students to think about controversial issues today, such as abortion or health care. To what extent should American leaders compromise on these issues? When is it right to compromise to "appease" opponents, and when is it right to take a tough stand?

Troubleshooting:

Make sure students are clear that, according to constitutional thinking at the time, Congress could interfere with slavery in territories, but not in states. Students may also forget the importance of political parties (Democrats and Whigs) in these disputes.

Some students may benefit from an explanation that 36°30' is an imaginary latitude line on a map. Latitude is the measure of how far a point is north or south from the equator

(Longitude measures how far east and west a point is from the Prime Meridian.) The distance is measured in degrees, and the points in between are measured in minutes.

B. QUICK MOTIVATOR (10–20 minutes)

Skip Handouts 1 and 2. Give Handout 3 for homework. In class, have students pair up and discuss their choices for three minutes or so. Ask for a show of hands for or against the compromise as a whole. Distribute Handout 4 for homework and have students comment on what they learned from these outcomes.

TEACHER NOTES FOR EXPANDING DISCUSSION

(For outcomes for students, see Handouts 2 and 4)

President Taylor proposed an alternative to the options in Handout 1. He thought that the new areas should skip the territory phase and quickly petition to become states. That way, Congress wouldn't have to deal with the question of slavery in territories. Everyone agreed that states had the right to decide whether to allow or prohibit slavery. Taylor's proposal involved complicating the procedure of territories becoming states, so it was left out of this lesson. If you decide to add it as an option to Handout 1, also add it to the outcomes sheet (Handout 2) and note that it was not chosen.

David Wilmot wanted his proviso to help white workers, not to abolish slavery. He called it the "White Man's Proviso."

The territorial phase of New Mexico described in Proposal 4 on Handout 3 is oversimplified as popular sovereignty. It was actually vague about what the territorial legislatures could do in regard to slavery. Evidence indicates that Senator Douglas intended that the legislatures could prohibit slavery, so it's in the lesson in the form of popular sovereignty.

One of the unintended consequences of the compromise was the weakening of the two political parties. Since both parties supported the compromise, those who opposed it (especially Northern Whigs and Southern Democrats) felt that they couldn't remain within the two parties as they existed.

Some historians believe the Compromise of 1850 is misnamed. They call it an "armistice" (a temporary truce) instead of a compromise. These historians argue that only four senators voted for all the bills. Rather, senators voted for the bills favorable to their regions, and ignored the unfavorable bills.

DECISION-MAKING ANALYSIS:

P = Problem
* **- Identify any underlying problem(s)**
- Consider other points of view
- What are my assumptions? Emotions?

A = Ask for information (about)
* - Historical context (history of this issue; context in the world)
- Reliability of sources
* **- Historical analogies**

G = Goals
- What are my main goals? Are they realistic?
* **- Generate options to achieve these goals. Are they ethical?**

E = Effects
* **- Predict unintended consequences.**
* **- Play out the options. What could go wrong?**

*Denotes topics emphasized in this lesson

- **Identify any underlying problems:** One underlying problem is the difference in size of populations and economies of the North and South. The fear of minority status by the South is an important underlying factor in the decisions made in this lesson.
- **Ask about context:** Students could ask a number of other questions, in addition to those on Handouts 1 and 5. For example:
- Do slaveholders have enough slaves to spread to the new territories? (No. The South faces a chronic labor shortage, which makes it even more difficult to take slaves to new territories.)
    - Are runaway slaves that much of a problem? (The actual numbers are very small, but most of the runaways are from states that border the North. So it is a big problem for slaveholders in states such as Missouri, Kentucky, and Virginia.)
- **Ask about analogies:** At the time, the public thought of analogies where compromise worked, such as the Missouri Compromise and the Compromise Tariff of 1833. Students should ask about differences between these other cases and the situation in 1850. (The situation in 1850 and the proposals are much more complex than in the previous compromises, making it less likely that they will work.)
- **Consider ethicality:** Abolitionists hated the compromise, since it allowed slavery to remain intact and enforced a stricter fugitive slave law, both of which they found morally reprehensible
- **Predict unintended consequences:** Several consequences are explained in Handouts 2 and 4

- **Play out option:** Getting the proposals passed in the Congress was one hurdle to an effective compromise. Stephen Douglas did a masterful job of making deals to get the bills passed. Carrying out the proposals presented another problem. The fugitive slave law was particularly difficult. As mentioned in the outcome (Handout 4), people in Northern cities resisted authorities and helped fugitives escape. Enforcing the act just increased Northern hatred of the compromise.

SOURCES

Cummins, D. Duane and William White. *The Origins of the Civil War*. New York: Benziger, 1972.

Freehling, William. *The Road to Disunion, Volume I: Secessionists at Bay*. New York: Oxford, 1990, Chapters 28, 29.

Goodwin, Doris. *Team of Rivals*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005, pp. 143–149.

Holt, Michael. *The Fate of their Country: Politicians, Slavery Extension, and the Coming of the Civil War*. New York: Hill & Wang, 2004.

Holt, Michael. *The Political Crisis of the 1850s*. New York: Wiley, 1978, Chapter 4.

Howe, Daniel Walker. *What Hath God Wrought*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 767–770.

Levine, Bruce. *Half Slave and Half Free: The Roots of the Civil War*. Revised edition. New York: Hill & Wang, 2005, pp. 186–190.

McDougall, Walter. *Throes of Democracy: The American Civil War Era, 1829–1877*. New York: Harper Collins, 2008, Chapter 6.

Potter, David. *The Impending Crisis, 1848–1861*. New York: Harper and Row, 1976, Chapter 5.

Stegmaier, Mark. *Texas, New Mexico, and the Compromise of 1850*. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1996, Chapter 1, Conclusion.

LESSON 7: THE WILMOT PROVISO AND COMPROMISE OF 1850

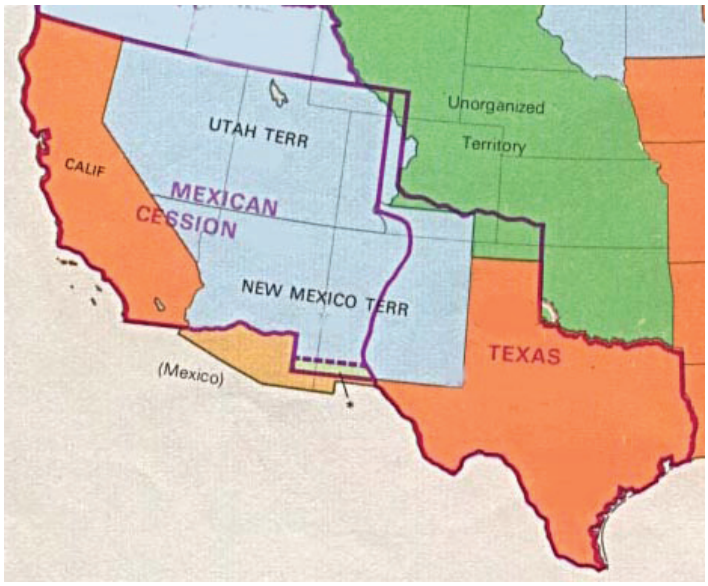
Vocabulary

- Mexican War—Fought between the U.S. and Mexico mainly over the Texas boundary
- Missouri Compromise—Missouri would enter the Union as a slave state, but there would be no more slavery north of 36°30'
- Wilmot Proviso—Bill to prevent slavery in any territory taken from Mexico
- Popular sovereignty—The idea that the people in each territory should vote to decide whether to allow slavery
- Fugitive Slave Law of 1850—Law that forced Northerners to return runaway slaves
- Henry Clay—Senator known as "The Great Compromiser" who originated the Compromise of 1850
- Compromise of 1850—California admitted as a free state; popular sovereignty in New Mexico; a stronger fugitive slave law; ended slave trade in Washington D.C.; border settled in favor of New Mexico
- Free Soil Party—This party was against the expansion of slavery into the territories
- *Uncle Tom's Cabin*—Antislavery novel written by Harriett Beecher Stowe

LESSON 7: MEXICAN TERRITORY, 1847

Student Handout 1: Problem

ANTEBELLUM AMERICA



The year is 1846 and you are a Congressman from Pennsylvania. The United States has been fighting Mexico for over a year in the Mexican War. Last month, American troops captured the Mexican capital, Mexico City. As a result, the U.S. is getting a huge amount of territory, including New Mexico, California, and an enlarged Texas. It's great to add all this territory to the country, but it also raises some important questions about the territory. What will you do regarding slavery in this new territory? Back in 1820, Congress agreed on the Missouri Compromise, which said that Missouri would be admitted as a slave state (and Maine as a free state), but there would be no more slavery in the Louisiana territory above the 36°30' line. Most of the territory captured from Mexico is below the 36°30' line, but a good portion of the territory is above the line (where slavery is prohibited).

So what is your decision on the new territory? Base your decision on what is best for the country, not what is best for your district or state. You may pick more than one option:

A. Prevent slavery from spreading into any territory won in the Mexican War
B. Allow the settlers in each territory to decide for themselves whether they will have slavery, without interference from the United States government. If a territory decides that it will be free of slavery, slaveholders would not be allowed to keep slaves there and would not be able to bring in more slaves.
C. Do not outlaw slavery in the territories. Neither the government of the United States, nor the governments of the new territories can prevent slavery in the territories. Slaveholders can choose to take slaves anywhere in the territories.
D. Extend the Missouri Compromise line to the Pacific Ocean. New territories below the line (which is most of the territory taken from Mexico) would be open to slavery, while slavery would be prevented north of the line.

E. Don't take any territory from Mexico. Give New Mexico, California, and the new part of Texas back to Mexico.
F. Do nothing. Let the situation work itself out.

Questions to help you make your decision:

1. What arguments have been made in favor of the spread of slavery?
2. What arguments have been made against the spread of slavery?
3. Is growing cotton (the main slave crop) suitable to the climates of New Mexico and California?

LESSON 7: MEXICAN TERRITORY, 1847

Student Handout 2: Outcomes

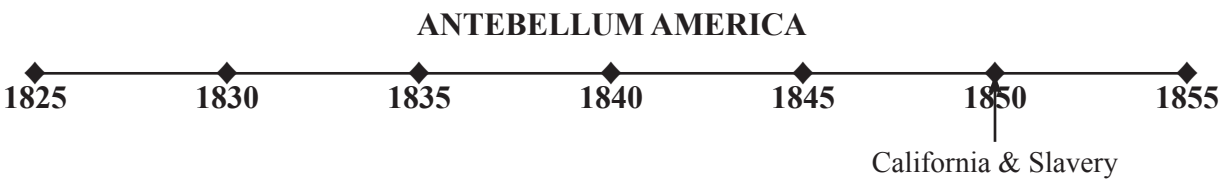
Congress decided to postpone any decision on slavery in the new territories. The House of Representatives passed a bill, called the Wilmot Proviso, to prevent any slavery in the new territories (Option A), but it was defeated in the Senate. The vote in both houses of Congress was sectional rather than along party lines. All Northerners but four supported the bill, regardless of party, and all Southern representatives opposed the bill. Eventually, with the formation of the Free Soil Party, Northerners in both parties wanted passage of the Wilmot Proviso (banning slavery in the new territories) because it was so popular with voters in the North.

Option B, called "popular sovereignty," was discussed but not approved. There was no decision in favor of any of the other options, although all were discussed. Southerners believed that slaveholders should be able to take slaves anywhere (Option C), but almost all Northerners opposed this extreme expansion of slavery. It would mean that the residents of the territory or even Congress could not vote to prevent slavery. Extending the Missouri Compromise line to the Pacific (Option D) was opposed by most Northerners. A small group of Northerners wanted to return the new territories (Option E), but this idea was quite unpopular, even in the North.

Since none of the proposals was approved in 1847, leaders in effect chose Option F (do nothing). The festering issue of slavery was left to worsen, to be faced by the divided nation in ever more difficult circumstances.

LESSON 7: CALIFORNIA, 1850

Student Handout 3: Problem



It is 1850 and the country faces a crisis. California has asked to be admitted as a free state, which would upset the balance of free and slave states in the Union. Southerners are feeling like a minority in the U.S., now that California has applied to become a free state. The South, which has a smaller population than the North, is already decidedly outnumbered in the House of Representatives. The addition of a new free state, which will add two new free-state senators, means the South will be outnumbered in the Senate as well. Worse, almost all new areas to be added to the Union will be free states. The South is falling further behind all the time. Meanwhile, some Southerners and Northerners want more regional parties that will represent their real interests, rather than these wishy-washy parties that include leaders from both North and South.

There are other issues regarding slavery as well. Southerners are upset about runaway slaves to the North. The Supreme Court ruled that each state could decide if it would enforce the fugitive slave act (which requires the return of runaway slaves). Since that Supreme Court decision, several Northern states have passed liberty laws, effectively preventing the return of runaways. There are only about 1000 runaways per year out of a slave population of almost 4 million. Nevertheless, runaway slaves are a significant problem for slave states that are near the North, such as Missouri, Maryland, Virginia, and Kentucky.

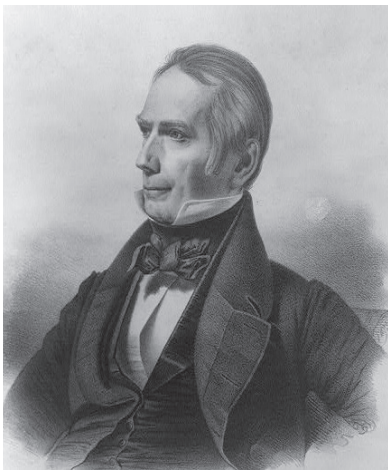
Northerners are upset by the slave trade in Washington, D.C. Buying and selling human beings in the nation's capital is an embarrassment to the principles of freedom for which the nation stands.

The new territories taken from Mexico present still other disputes. Some Northern leaders want the Wilmot Proviso enforced, which prohibits slavery in the new territories. Other Northerners argue that the Wilmot Proviso is unnecessary, because slavery is prohibited by Mexican law, which is still in force. Moreover, even if it were allowed, slavery would never work in the deserts of New Mexico, where plantation crops could not be grown. Meanwhile, Southerners want all new territories open to slavery without interference. One Southern Whig representative threatened to secede (have his state leave the U.S.) if slavery is excluded from New Mexico and California. Several Democrats have proposed that the residents of New Mexico decide for themselves whether to allow slavery (called "popular sovereignty").

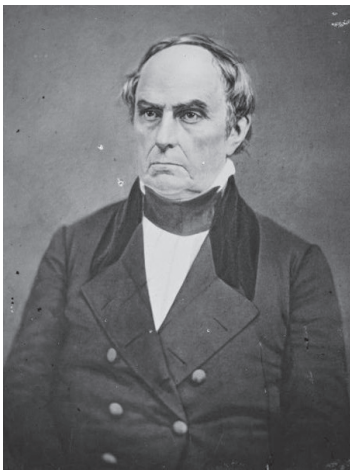
There is even a dispute between Texas (a slave state) and the New Mexico area (under the authority of the U.S. government, where slavery is against the law) over the boundary between the two. Texas wants the area all the way to Santa Fe (about half of New Mexico). Texas has claimed this area for over ten years, hoping to add the prosperous Santa Fe trade to the Texas economy and help pay off the burdensome Texas debt. People in New Mexico want the border to be where it was traditionally, leaving a much larger New Mexico. There are slaveholders in the disputed area, with about 20,000 slaves. If the area goes to New Mexico, these slaveowners will have to move. In addition, Texans are hoping that a larger Texas can be made into two or three slave states, thus balancing off new free states (this will help them in the Senate, where each state gets two senators regardless of population).

Members of Congress have proposed a compromise, the key provisions of which are as follows:

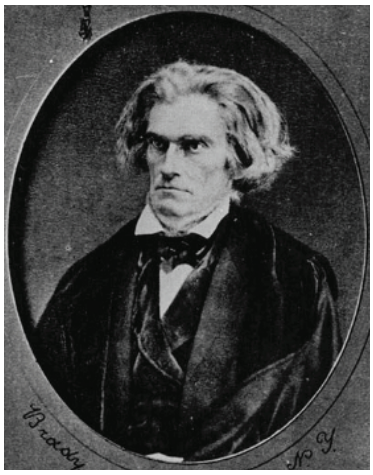
A. California will be admitted as a free state
B. Slavery will continue in Washington, D.C., but the slave trade in the city will be abolished
C. A tougher fugitive slave law. The new Fugitive Slave Law would make it a crime to help a fugitive slave, and force northerners to help hunt down runaway slaves in their states. Accused runaways will not be able to testify in court and would not get a jury trial.
D. The New Mexico and Utah territories will be open to slavery if the people there vote for it (popular sovereignty)
E. Settlement of the border dispute in favor of a larger New Mexico (and thus a smaller Texas), in exchange for the national government paying off the debts of Texas



Henry Clay



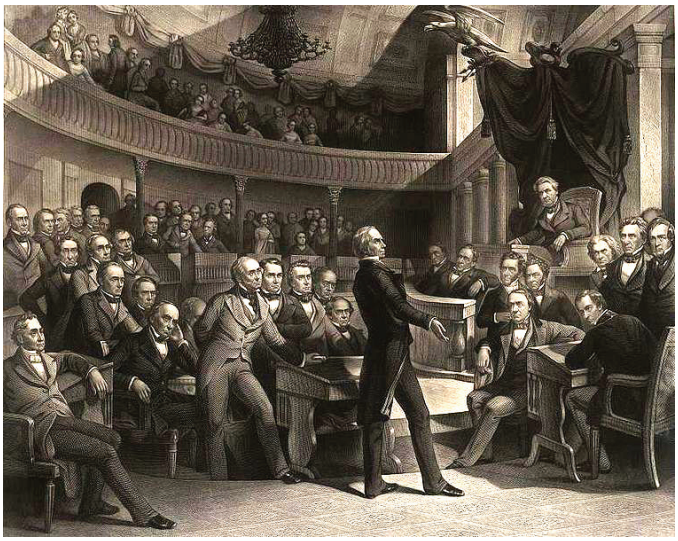
Daniel Webster



John C. Calhoun

Senators Henry Clay and Daniel Webster are in favor of the compromise, arguing that compromise is necessary in order to preserve the union. They believe nothing will be gained by people insisting on getting everything they want; that attitude will only prevent compromise. Destroying the Union doesn't help anyone, slave or free. Webster stated that he speaks "not as a Massachusetts man, nor as a Northern man, but as an American." He

sees no need to restrict slavery in New Mexico, as the desert would keep slavery out. Senator John C. Calhoun argued against the compromise, saying that it would make the South into a permanent minority. He said that "if by your legislation, you seek to drive us [the South] from the territories of California and New Mexico, purchased by the common blood of the whole people, and to abolish slavery in this District, thereby to fix a national degradation upon half the states of this Confederacy, *I am for disunion*."



Clay (standing) arguing for the compromise in the Senate

Decision 1—The compromise as a whole:

You have to vote for or against the compromise, which contains all five proposals. You can't pick just the ones you favor. Based on whether it is good for the country, will you support this compromise as a whole? Is it better to promote this compromise on slavery issues or vote the compromise down and try to work the issues out in a different way? Explain.

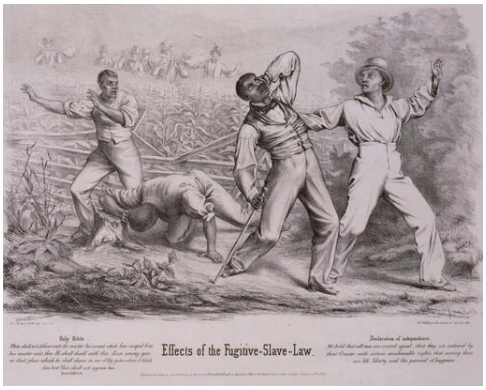
Decision 2—The compromise as separate bills:

Now you can vote for the five parts of the compromise separately. Based on whether it is good for the country, which will you support? Explain.
Admit California as a free state

A. Let slavery continue in Washington, D.C., but abolish the slave trade
B. A tougher fugitive slave law
C. Popular sovereignty in New Mexico and Utah
D. Larger New Mexico (and a smaller Texas); national government pays Texas's debt

LESSON 7: CALIFORNIA, 1850

Student Handout 4: Outcomes



An illustration protesting the Fugitive Slave Law

Congress rejected Clay and Webster's compromise—the Compromise of 1850—as a single package, but later approved all five of the bills separately. President Millard Fillmore supported the compromise and said it was the final settlement on slavery. (President Taylor, who was more negative on the compromise, died during the crisis.) A majority of Americans accepted the compromise as an end to sectional disagreements over slavery. However, underneath, there was trouble. Many Northerners hated the stronger fugitive slave law. They felt it violated rights, since accused runaways couldn't testify or be tried by a jury. Abolitionists in Syracuse, Boston, and other Northern cities forcibly rescued fugitives from slave catchers, leading to several deaths. Antislavery Northerners further disliked the possibility of slavery in New Mexico. Nevertheless, evidence from the 1852 elections showed a significant drop in support in the North for the Free Soil Party (which opposed the compromise). Most Northerners did not actively oppose the compromise.

Some Southerners felt they got a bad deal because the North now had an extra state (so two extra senators), while there was no practical way for slavery to spread to New Mexico. Even in the South, however, an anticompromise candidate only got a few thousand votes out of millions cast. A majority of Southerners likewise wanted to put the slavery issue behind them.

Overall, the compromise kept the Union together, but it did not resolve the underlying problems of the expansion of slavery in the western territories and states. Some historians believe that the compromise was the best option that leaders could make under the circumstances. Working out any compromise was worthwhile, since compromise was the only way to avoid secession. The compromise prevented a much worse crisis at that time. Moreover, the 10 years before the Civil War allowed the North to expand economically and thus become stronger to win the war and end slavery. In that sense, the Compromise of 1850 gave the North a needed breather.

Other historians feel that it would have been better to vote the compromise down and face the underlying issues directly. Without resolving the underlying issues, the compromise did little good. One historian states, "In truth it *wasn't* a compromise, it *assaulted* states' rights, and it *fanned* the flames of disunion." The question of slavery had been avoided, not settled. The anger over the Fugitive Slave Law led to Harriett Beecher Stowe's 1852 abolitionist novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which sold over 300,000 copies, increasing sectional hostility. Some believe the compromise led to the Civil War.

LESSON 7: MEXICAN TERRITORY, 1847

Student Handout 5: Suggested Answers to Handout 1

1. **What arguments have been made in favor of the spread of slavery?**
   - If more free states are admitted without a corresponding increase in the number of slave states, the North will eventually get a decisive majority of senators. Northern senators could then pass a law abolishing slavery.
   - Slaveholders require fresh Western lands to remain profitable
   - Without further plantation land the demand for slaves will decline and the value of slaves will drop with it
   - Northerners can take their property into the new territories, so Southerners have the right to take their property (slaves) with them into the territories

2. **What arguments have been made against the spread of slavery?**
   - Mexico has abolished slavery, so it would be wrong to reintroduce it to these former Mexican territories (New Mexico and California)
   - Slavery is an inefficient system, which will die out without new territory
   - Free labor cannot compete with slave labor, since slaves are not paid. So, in order to preserve the expansion of the free economic system in the West, slavery must be prevented.
   - Whites don't want to deal with African Americans in the West, whether slave or free

3. **Is growing cotton (the main slave crop) suitable to the climates of New Mexico and California?**
   - Not in New Mexico. People in both the North and South agree that cotton is not suitable to the climate in almost any part of New Mexico. There is some possibility for slave plantations in some parts of California, but the people there have already voted to make slavery illegal.

LESSON 8: KANSAS-NEBRASKA ACT, 1854

Teacher Pages

OVERVIEW

The Kansas-Nebraska Act was one of the worst decisions in all of American history. The act led to widespread violence between Northerners and Southerners in the Kansas Territory, a crucial step on the road to civil war. Many Northerners saw the act as clear evidence of a "slave conspiracy," reducing the possibility of compromise between the two regions. In addition, the act caused Democrats and Whigs to realign into regional parties—Democrats (South) and Republicans (North). This realignment removed an important avenue for discussion and compromise. Will students support this foolish act?

VOCABULARY

- Franklin Pierce—President who supported the Kansas-Nebraska Act
- "Conscience Whig"—A Whig who opposed slavery out of conscience
- "Cotton Whig"—A Whig who supported slavery
- Missouri Compromise—An agreement that Missouri would become a slave state, but there would be no more slavery north of 36°30'.
- Stephen Douglas—Senator who started and pushed the Kansas-Nebraska Act through
- Kansas-Nebraska Act—An act that opened Kansas and Nebraska to popular sovereignty
- Popular sovereignty—The idea that the people in each territory should vote to decide whether to allow slavery
- Fugitive Slave Law of 1850—Law that forced Northerners to return runaway slaves
- "Bleeding Kansas"—Violence in Kansas after the Kansas-Nebraska Act

DECISION-MAKING SKILLS EMPHASIZED

- Identify underlying problems
- Consider other points of view
- Recognize assumptions
- Ask questions about context
- Generate options—are they ethical?
- Predict unintended consequences
- Play out options

LESSON PLAN

A. IN-DEPTH LESSON (one 40-minute class period)

Procedure**:**

Distribute Handout 1. Have students read it silently and decide whether they will support the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Next, divide students into groups and have them discuss their decision. Give time for students to ask questions. Bring the class back together and ask students to give arguments for and against the act. At the conclusion of the discussion, distribute Handout 2 with the outcomes or tell the class what actually happened. You could also use the primary source, the Kansas-Nebraska Act (Handout 3), at this point to help students analyze the act.

Reflecting on Decision Making:

Ask students what they would have done differently, if anything, now that they know the outcomes of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Which decision-making skills were especially important in making decisions about this Act? Which of the letters of **P-A-G-E** applied especially to this problem? (See the "Decision-Making Analysis" section below for ideas.) Ask students what they did well or poorly on in terms of the **P-A-G-E** analysis of decision-making. Discuss their answers.

Putting the Actual Decisions Into Historical Context:

Ask students: Were historical factors more important to the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, or were individuals more important? (Historical forces, such as population imbalance, and the Constitution [which gives each state two senators] played a key role in the act, but Stephen Douglas was also vital in getting the act passed.)

Connecting to Today:

Ask students to think of issues today in which political leaders may be taking a position for political popularity rather than because they believe that position is best for the country.

Troubleshooting:

Remind students that because the Constitution assigns two senators to each state regardless of the state's population, the number of states was an important factor in national politics. Maintaining the balance between slave states and free states was crucial to Southerners. They felt they needed to keep an equal number of senators to prevent the North from passing antislavery legislation.

B. QUICK MOTIVATOR (10–20 minutes)

Give Handout 1 for homework. In class, have students pair up and discuss their choices for three minutes or so. Ask how many students support the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Spend about five minutes eliciting students' arguments for and against supporting the act. Distribute Handout 2 for homework and have students comment on what they learned from these outcomes.

TEACHER NOTES FOR EXPANDING DISCUSSION

(For outcomes for students, see Handout 2)

Northern Cotton Whigs were referred to by opponents of slavery as "Lords of the Loom," while Southern Ctton Whigs were referred to as "Lords of the Lash."

The New England Emigrant Aid Society sent abolitionists into Kansas armed with rifles nicknamed "Beecher's Bibles."

DECISION-MAKING ANALYSIS:

P = Problem
* **- Identify any underlying problem(s)**
* - Consider other points of view
* - What are my assumptions? Emotions?

A = Ask for information (about)
* - Historical context (history of this issue; context in the world)
  - Reliability of sources
  - Historical analogies

G = Goals
  - What are my main goals? Are they realistic?
* **- Generate options to achieve these goals. Are they ethical?**

E = Effects
* **- Predict unintended consequences.**
* **- Play out the options. What could go wrong?**

*Denotes topics emphasized in this lesson

- **Identify any underlying problems:** One underlying problem is the difference in size of the populations and economies of the North and South. The fear of minority status by the South is an important underlying factor in the decisions made in this lesson, as it was in decisions on the Compromise of 1850 (Lesson 7). There is also a labor shortage in the South, which is another underlying problem. The slave population, although it continued to grow, was not keeping up with the increasing demand for labor. The labor shortage made it increasingly unlikely that slaveholders could populate all the new territories being added to the United States. Thus, most new territories would probably prohibit slavery. To counter this unpromising scenario, Southerners were likely to act aggressively in those areas where they could gain control of the territorial government.
- **Consider other points of view:** Students should consider the viewpoint of slaveholders in Missouri. Free areas were already bordering Missouri on the east and north. A free territory of Kansas on the west would mean Missouri would be surrounded on three sides by territory where slaves could run away. Slaveholders in Missouri were prepared to invade Kansas and gain control of the government

to prevent it from becoming a free territory. Northern whites constituted another point of view. They did not want to compete against slave labor, so they opposed the Kansas-Nebraska Act (which would further spread slavery).

- **Recognize assumptions, emotions:** The various sides in the slavery controversy were operating with different basic assumptions. Senator Douglas and those who supported compromise felt the Union was more important than the issue of slavery. As long as they preserved the Union, they believed they could eventually solve the problem of slavery. But many abolitionists felt that the Union was not worth preserving with slavery in it. Ironically, many slaveholders also felt the Union was not worth preserving, if slavery were not allowed to expand.
- **Ask about context:** Students could ask a number of questions, such as:
- Is the situation favorable for slaveholders to stay in Kansas? (No. Only a small part of the state is suitable for plantation crops. Moreover, the shortage of slaves in the South makes it unlikely that many slaveholders would move slaves to a new area; the new area may be unprofitable.)
    - What are the chances of the railroad bill passing? (Not very good. The turmoil over Kansas will probably lead Congress to delay the bill until the situation in that territory is resolved. That could take years.)
- **Consider ethical options:** Abolitionists hated the Kansas-Nebraska Act, since it was allowing the evil institution of slavery to expand
- **Predict unintended consequences:** Several consequences are explained in Handout 2. One of the most significant outcomes was the perception in the North that the minority in the South was controlling the national government. The Kansas-Nebraska Act was one of the most important causes of the Civil War.
- **Play out option:** Getting the Kansas-Nebraska Act passed in Congress was difficult. Stephen Douglas did a masterful job of making deals to get it passed. However, the major problems started once the act passed. Students should anticipate that once the area opened to settlers, slaveholders and antislavery men would move there with the intention of gaining control of the territory. Since the stakes were so high, fraud and other tricks would be likely. Students should also anticipate that violence was probable.

SOURCES

Cummins, D. Duane and William White. *The Origins of the Civil War*. New York: Benziger, 1972.

Foner, Eric. *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970, pp. 93–95, 155–160.

Freehling, William. *The Road to Disunion, Volume I: Secessionists at Bay*. New York: Oxford, 1990, Chapters 30, 31.

Freehling, William. *The Road to Disunion, Volume II: Secessionists Triumphant*. New York: Oxford, 2007, Chapter 6.

Goodwin, Doris. *Team of Rivals*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005, pp. 160–165, 196.

Holt, Michael. *The Fate of Their Country: Politicians, Slavery Extension, and the Coming of the Civil War*. New York: Hill & Wang, 2004.

Holt, Michael. *The Political Crisis of the 1850s*. New York: Wiley, 1978, Chapter 6.

"Kansas-Nebraska Act." *The Avalon Project*. Available at http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/kanneb.asp.

Levine, Bruce. *Half Slave and Half Free: The Roots of the Civil War*. Revised edition. New York: Hill & Wang, 2005, pp. 192–8.

McDougall, Walter. *Throes of Democracy: The American Civil War Era, 1829–1877*. New York: Harper Collins, 2008, Chapter 6.

Potter, David. *The Impending Crisis, 1848–1861*. New York: Harper and Row, 1976, Chapter 7.

LESSON 8: KANSAS-NEBRASKA ACT, 1854

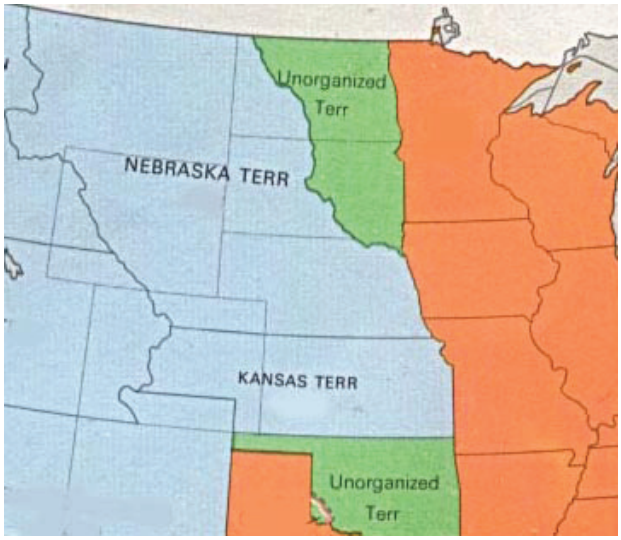
Vocabulary

- Franklin Pierce—President who supported the Kansas-Nebraska Act
- "Conscience Whig"—A Whig who opposed slavery out of conscience
- "Cotton Whig"—A Whig who supported slavery
- Missouri Compromise—An agreement that Missouri would become a slave state, but there would be no more slavery north of 36°30'.
- Stephen Douglas—Senator who started and pushed the Kansas-Nebraska Act through
- Kansas-Nebraska Act—An act that opened Kansas and Nebraska to popular sovereignty
- Popular sovereignty—The idea that the people in each territory should vote to decide whether to allow slavery
- Fugitive Slave Law of 1850—Law that forced Northerners to return runaway slaves
- "Bleeding Kansas"—Violence in Kansas after the Kansas-Nebraska Act

LESSON 8: KANSAS-NEBRASKA ACT, 1854

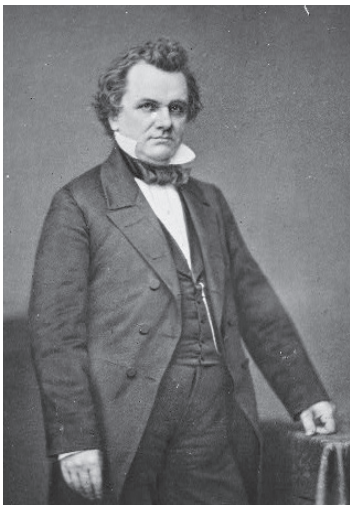
Student Handout 1: Problem

ANTEBELLUM AMERICA



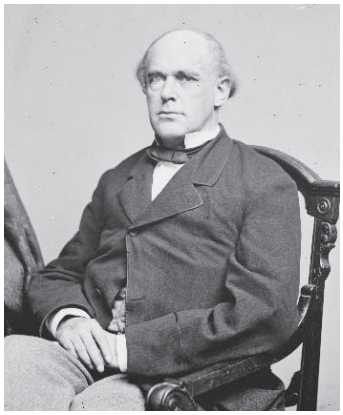
The year is 1854 and you are President Franklin Pierce. It is a tense time for the country. There are thousands of abolitionists in the North who have been agitating against slavery. They don't speak for a majority of Northerners, but they've been causing a lot of debate. Southern congressmen have acted to prevent antislavery petitions from being read in Congress by what is called the "gag rule."

The two political parties have, until recently, been able to keep the agitation over slavery in the background. Since each party consists of proslavery and antislavery groups, each has stressed issues other than slavery. The Democrats have been effective in stressing westward expansion, or Manifest Destiny. The Whigs have emphasized a high tariff to keep the "Conscience Whigs" (abolitionist) and "Cotton Whigs" (proslavery Southern planters and Northern manufacturers) united in the party. Unfortunately for the Whigs, the country is prospering with a *low* tariff, so slavery is more of a dominant issue for them. The Fugitive Slave Act mobilized the abolitionists (Conscience Whigs), furthering the division within the party. Southerners in border states (such as Missouri) feel that the Fugitive Slave Law isn't working because there is Northern resistance. In 1852, the abolitionist novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* roused even more resentment in the North against slavery, selling more than 300,000 copies. The Democrats won the 1852 election in a landslide, partly because they stayed united behind the Compromise of 1850, while the Whigs split over it. Since a majority of Americans seems to favor a compromise on the issue of slavery in the territories, the Democrats gained the support of the voters over the Whigs.


Stephen Douglas

Into this difficult situation, Senator Stephen Douglas of Illinois has introduced the Kansas-Nebraska Act. In this act, the Pacific Railway route would be in the North, running west from Chicago out to California. In order to get Southern votes for the bill, Douglas has asserted that the Missouri Compromise line would be void (the line runs at the southern boundary of Missouri; north of that line, slavery is outlawed). The bill says that the territories north of the line are now open to popular sovereignty. This means that the people in those territories can choose whether to allow slavery. The bill also divides the area into northern (Nebraska) and southern (Kansas) territories. Many Americans think the split into two territories was done to make one a free state and one a slave state. Douglas believes that popular sovereignty *always* leads to free territories and states. So, why get upset about the Missouri Compromise line, when the areas will end up free of slavery anyway?

Slaveholders throughout the South like the act. It adds the possibility of another slave state to balance new free states. Missouri slaveholders are afraid that if Kansas becomes a free territory or state, they would be surrounded on three sides by free areas to which slaves could flee. The new act holds the possibility that Kansas could become a slave state, preventing Missouri from being surrounded. Slaveholders in Missouri are a small minority of the total population of the state, and yet are used to achieving political victories.


Salmon Chase

Those against slavery feel the Kansas-Nebraska Act is bad for the country even if slavery does not spread to either territory, since it ends the national government's stated policy to oppose the spread of slavery, as it had done in the Northwest Ordinance and the Missouri Compromise.

Senator Salmon Chase of Ohio argues that the Kansas-Nebraska Act is part of a conspiracy by the "Slave Power" of Southern leaders to spread slavery everywhere in the territories. For many Northerners, the repeal of the Missouri Compromise shows that the South will throw out compromises to spread slavery. They feel the Kansas-Nebraska Act is a grave threat to the Union. Senator Chase says that Northerners should protest against the act in every way possible rather than allow the Missouri Compromise to be repealed.

Will you support the Kansas-Nebraska Act? Explain.

LESSON 8: KANSAS-NEBRASKA ACT, 1854

Student Handout 2: Outcomes

Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act, and President Pierce signed it into law. It led to the first significant violence between Northerners and Southerners in the Kansas Territory, a crucial escalation on the road to civil war. In addition, the act caused Democrats and Whigs to realign into regional parties—the Democrats (South) and the Republicans (North). This realignment removed an important avenue for discussion and compromise. Compounding the problem, many Northerners saw irrefutable evidence that the act was part of a slave conspiracy. They felt Southerners were bent on expanding slavery at any cost. Historians agree that the act was one of the main events leading to Civil War.

Once the act passed, settlers flocked to Kansas. Most were from the North, encouraged by new lands and by abolitionist societies. Those in favor of slavery also came to Kansas. Many so-called "border ruffians" from Missouri stayed just long enough to vote and then return to their home state. Despite an overwhelming majority of antislavery voters in Kansas, the vote was for a proslavery territory governed by proslavery laws. It was a fraudulent government: Only people with proslavery views could hold public office. People making public statements against slavery were subject to imprisonment. President Pierce gave official recognition to the proslavery government in Kansas. Violence followed quickly. Proslavery forces destroyed numerous buildings, including newspaper offices, in the antislavery town of Lawrence. On the other side, abolitionist John Brown carried out a massacre of men, women, and children at Pottawatomie. In all, about 200 people were killed by their fellow Americans in what was referred to as "Bleeding Kansas."

An antislavery cartoon criticizing the situation in Kansas

The act also turned the political parties into regional groups. Northerners in general were outraged by the act. Northerners in the Whig and Democratic Parties left and became part of the new Republican Party, which was clearly opposed to the expansion of slavery. Northern representatives and senators especially resented being forced by party loyalty to vote for a bill that they opposed. The Whig Party fell apart in 1854 and Northern Democrats lost almost 75% of the seats they had held in the North just two years earlier. Meanwhile, with the Whig Party falling apart, Southern Whigs joined the Democratic Party, which they supported because it had passed the fair-minded Kansas-Nebraska Act. The Democrats were now the party of the South; the Republicans, the party of the North.

Before the Kansas-Nebraska Act, Northerners had claimed that there was a slave conspiracy to control the government. The conspiracy theory was much more believable after the act. President Pierce appeared to be a puppet of the South, using government jobs as bribes to get representatives and senators to vote for the bill. The Missouri Compromise, a symbol for over three decades of efforts to overcome this difficult issue of slavery, was simply voided by Kansas-Nebraska. Was no compromise to preserve the Union sacred to the South? No matter how much opposition there was against slavery, it always seemed to spread, undermining free labor (since slaves were, or at least appeared to be, cheaper than free labor).

The South won a hollow victory by getting the act passed and by succeeding in, at least initially, introducing the institution of slavery into Kansas. But as one Southerner put it, a minority shouldn't bully a majority. Southerners chose a hard line on the expansion of slavery, but it caused a powerful reaction against the South in the end. Many Northerners felt the Kansas-Nebraska Act showed that the American republican government was being undermined.

No one seemed to benefit from the act. The railroad bill failed to pass, so the North didn't get the railroad it wanted. The South, meanwhile, didn't get slavery in Kansas; while Kansas was a slave state in name, slavery never took hold. Even the concept of popular sovereignty was corrupted by the act. Before 1854, Northerners viewed popular sovereignty as a way to prevent the expansion of slavery (since a majority of free settlers would vote to prevent slavery). After the Kansas-Nebraska Act, popular sovereignty was identified with opening territories to slavery where it had previously been prevented.

Some historians believe the author of the act, Stephen Douglas, was hoping to stir the slavery controversy, which was more of a difficulty for the opposition Whig Party. By doing this, it was thought that he hoped to hurt the Whigs and thereby help the Democrats. Northern and Southern congressmen who voted for the act hoped to increase their popularity with voters in their districts. Many political leaders on both sides were thinking of getting reelected more than considering what was good for the country.

The long-term effects of the Kansas-Nebraska Act are truly profound. It was one of the most important decisions leading to the Civil War, a momentous event in American history. The war caused the deaths of 600,000 Americans—a higher number than all of America's other wars combined. In addition, the war brought the end of slavery and increased the reach and power of the national government over states and individuals. If the congressmen and the president could have seen the historic effects of this act, they most certainly would have reconsidered their decision.

LESSON 8: KANSAS-NEBRASKA ACT, 1854

Student Handout 3: Primary Source

An Act to Organize the Territories of Nebraska and Kansas (excerpt)

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That all that part of the territory of the United States included within the following limits,… be, and the same is hereby, created into a temporary government by the name of the Territory Nebraska; and when admitted as a State or States, the said Territory or any portion of the same, shall be received into the Union with or without slavery, as their constitution may prescribe at the time of the admission: Provided, That nothing in this act contained shall be construed to inhibit the government of the United States from dividing said Territory into two or more Territories…

SEC. 5. *And be it further enacted*, That every free white male inhabitant above the age of twenty-one years who shall be an actual resident of said Territory, and shall possess the qualifications hereinafter prescribed, shall be entitled to vote at the first election, and shall be eligible to any office within the said Territory; but the qualifications of voters, and of holding office, at all subsequent elections, shall be such as shall be prescribed by the Legislative Assembly…

SEC. 34. *And be it further enacted*, That when the lands in the said Territory shall be surveyed under the direction of the government of the United States, preparatory to bringing the same into market, sections numbered sixteen and thirty-six in each township in said Territory shall be, and the same are hereby, reserved for the purpose of being applied to schools in said Territory, and in the States and Territories hereafter to be erected out of the same…

Approved, May 30, 1854.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. According to the act, who could vote in the first election? Can you see a problem with the term "actual resident" in Section 5?
2. What problem might result from the first election being decided by "actual residents" who elect a legislative assembly to control all future elections?
3. Why do you think schools were included in the act?
4. Should this act be considered a great document in U.S. history?